

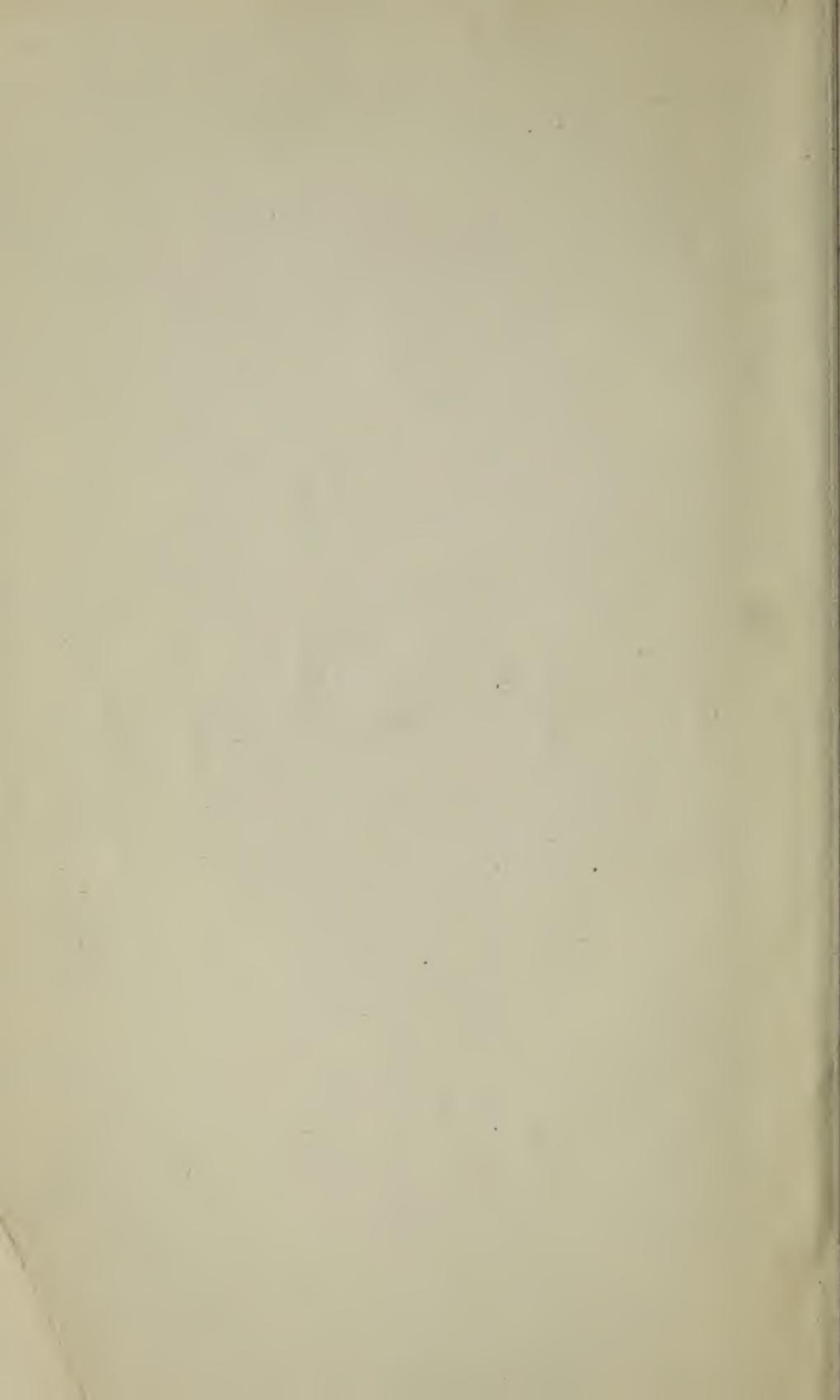
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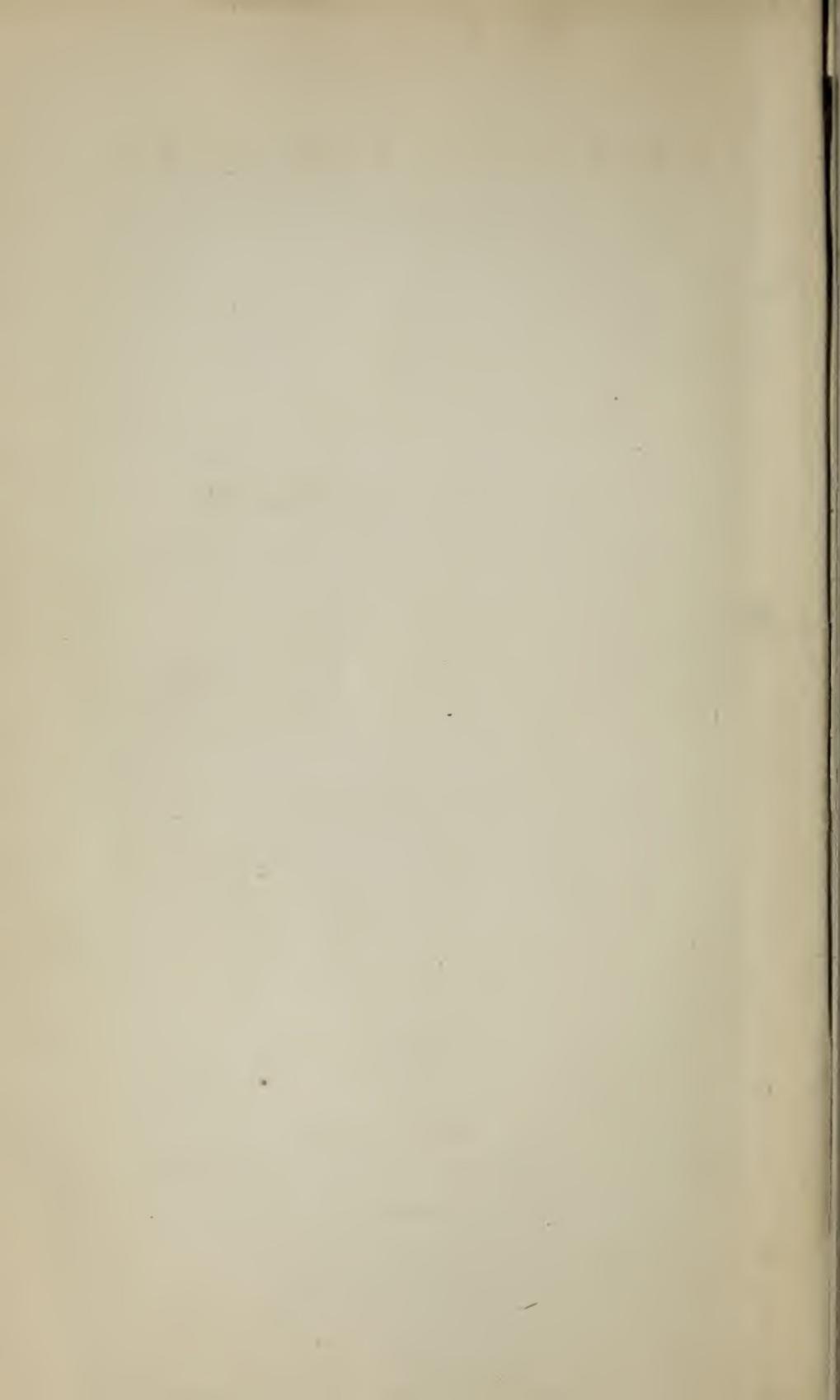
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FAITHFUL FOR EVER.

BY

COVENTRY PATMORE,

AUTHOR OF "THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE."

Of love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel?

TENNYSON.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

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BOOK I.

HONORIA.

I.

FREDERICK GRAHAM TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK GRAHAM TO HIS
MOTHER.

MOTHER, I smile at your alarms !
Against my Wiltshire Cousins'
charms
I'm shielded by a prior spell.
The fever, love, as I've heard tell,
Like other nursery maladies,
Is never badly taken twice.
Have you forgotten Charlotte Hayes,
My playmate in the pleasant days
At Knatchley, and her sister, Anne ;
The twins, so made on the same plan,
That one wore blue, the other white,

To mark them to their father's sight ;
And how, at Knatchley harvesting,
You bade me kiss her in the ring,
Like Anne and all the others ? You,
That never of my sickness knew,
Will laugh, yet had I the disease,
And gravely, if the signs are these :

As, ere the Spring has any power,
The almond branch all turns to flower,
Though not a leaf is out, so she
The bloom of life provoked in me,
And, hard till then and selfish, I
Was thenceforth naught but sanctity
And service ; life was mere delight
In being wholly good and right,
As she was ; just, without a slur ;
Honouring myself no less than her ;
Obeying, in the loneliest place,
Ev'n to the slightest gesture, grace,
Assured that one so fair, so true,

Somehow he served that was so too.
For me, hence weak towards the weak,
No more the unnested blackbird's shriek
Startled the light-leaved wood ; on high
Wander'd the gadding butterfly,
Unscared by my flung cap ; the bee,
Rifling the hollyhock in glee,
Was no more trapp'd with his own flower,
And for his honey slain. Her power,
From great things even to the grass
Through which the unfenced footways
 pass,
Was law, and that which keeps the law,
Cherubic gayety and awe ;
Day was her doing, so the lark
Had reason for his song ; the dark
In anagram innumEROus spelt
Her name with stars that throbb'd and felt ;
'T was the sad summit of delight
To wake and weep for her at night ;

She turn'd to triumph or to shame
The issue of each childish game ;
The heart would come into my throat
At rosebuds ; howsoe'er remote,
In opposition or consent,
Each thing, or person, or event,
Or seeming neutral howsoe'er,
All, in the live, electric air,
Awoke, took aspect, and confess'd
In her a centre of unrest,
Yea, stocks and stones within me bred
Anxieties of joy and dread.

O, bright, apocalyptic sky
O'erarching childhood ! Far and nigh
Mystery and obscuration none,
Yet nowhere any moon or sun !
What reason for these sighs ? What hope,
Daunting with its audacious scope
The disconcerted heart, affects
These ceremonies and respects ?

Why stratagems in everything ?
Why, why not kiss her in the ring ?
'T is nothing strange that warriors bold,
Whose fierce, forecasting eyes behold
The city they desire to sack,
Humbly begin their proud attack
By delving ditches two miles off,
Aware how the fair place would scoff
At hasty wooing ; but, O child,
Why thus approach thy playmate mild !

One morning, when it flush'd my
thought

That what in me such wonder wrought
Was call'd, in men and women, love,
And, sick with vanity thereof,
I, saying loud, " I love her," told
My secret to myself, behold
A crisis in my mystery !
For, suddenly, I seem'd to be
Whirl'd round, and bound with showers
of threads,

As when the furious spider sheds
Captiveity upon the fly,
To still his buzzing till he die ;
Only, with me, the bonds that flew,
Enfolding, thrill'd me through and
through

With bliss beyond aught heaven can have,
And pride to call myself her slave.

A long, green slip of wilder'd land,
With Knatchley Wood on either hand,
Sunder'd our home from hers. This day
Joy was mine as I went that way.

I stretch'd my arms to the sky, and sprang
O'er the elastic sod, and sang
“ I love her, love her ! ” to an air
Which with the words came, then and
there ;

And even now, when I would know
All was not always dull and low,
I whistle a turn of the sweet strain
Love taught me in that lonely lane.

Such glories fade, with no more mark
Than when the sunset turns to dark.
They die, the rapture and the grace
Ineffable, nor leave a trace,
Except sometimes (since joy is joy,
In sick or fane, in man or boy)
A heart which, having felt no less
Than pure and perfect happiness,
Is duly dainty of delight ;
A patient, poignant appetite
For pleasures that exceed so much
The poor things which the world calls
such,
That, when these tempt it, then you may
The lion with a wisp of hay.

That Charlotte, whom I scarcely knew
From Anne but by her ribbons blue,
Was loved, Anne less than look'd at, shows
That liking still by favour goes !
This Love is a divinity,

And holds his high election free
Of human merit ; or, let's say,
A child by ladies call'd to play,
But careles of their becks and wiles,
Till, seeing one who fits and smiles
Like any else, yet only charms,
He cries to come into her arms.

Then, for my Cousins, fear me not !
None ever loved because he ought.
Fatal were else this graceful house,
So full of light from ladies' brows.
There's Mary ; Heaven in her appears
Like sunshine through the shower's last
 tears ;
Mildred's of Earth, but gayer far
Than most men's thoughts of Heaven are ;
But, for Honoria, Heaven and Earth
Seal'd amity in her sweet birth.
The noble Girl ! With whom she talks
She knights first with her smile ; she walks,

Stands, dances, to such sweet effect
Alone she seems to go erect.
The brightest and the chasteſt brow
Rules o'er a cheek which seems to show
That love, as a mere vague ſuſpeneſe
Of apprehenſive innocence,
Perturbs her heart ; love without aim
Or object, like the holy flame
That in the Vestals' Temple glow'd,
Without the image of a god.
And this ſimplicity moft pure
She ſets off with no leſs a lure
Of culture, nobly ſkill'd to raiſe
The power, the pride, and mutual praife
Of human perfonality
Above the common ſort ſo high
It makes ſuch homely ſouls as mine
Wonder how brightly life may ſhine.
Ah, how you'd love her ! Even in drefs
She makes the common mode exprefſe.

New knowledge of what's fit so well
'T is virtue gayly visible!
Nay, but her silken fash to me
Were more than all morality,
But that the old, sweet, feverous ill
Has left me master of my will.

II.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MY dearest Child, Honoria sways
A double power, through Charlotte Hayes!

In minds to first-love's memory pledged
The second Cupid's born full-fledged.
The Churchills came, last Spring, to Spa,
And stay'd with me a week. I saw,
And own I trembled for the day
When you should see that beauty, gay
And pure as apple-blooms, that show
Outside a blush and inside snow;
That high and touching elegance
Which even your raptures scarce enhance.

Ah, haste from her enchanting side !
No friend for you, far less a bride.
But, warning from a hope so wild,
I wrong you. Yet this know, my child :
He that but lends his heart to hear
The music of a foreign sphere,
Is thenceforth lonely, and for all
His days like one who treads the Wall
Of China, and on this hand sees
Cities and their civilities,
And on the other lions. Well,
(Your rash reply I thus foretell,)
Good is the knowledge of what's fair,
Though bought with temporal despair.
Yes, good for one, but not for two !
Will it content your wife that you
Should pine for love, in love's embrace,
Because you've known a prouder grace ;
Disturb with inward sighs your rest,
Because, though good, she's not the best ;

Her acts of fondness almost shun,
Because they are handsomer meant than
done ?

You would, you think, be just and kind,
And keep your counsel ! You will find
You cannot such a secret keep.

'T will out, like murder, in your sleep ;
A touch will tell it, though, for pride,
She may her bitter knowledge hide ;
And, whilst she accepts love's make-
believe,

You'll twice despise what you'd deceive.

For your sake I am glad to hear
You fail so soon. I send you, dear,
A trifling present ; 't will supply
Your Salisbury costs. You have to buy
Almost an outfit for this cruise !

But many are good enough to use
Again, among the things you send
To give away. My maid shall mend

And let you have them back. Adieu !
Tell me of all you are and do.
I know, thank God, whate'er it be,
'T will need no veil 'twixt you and me.

III.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

THE multitude of voices blythe
 Of early day, the hissing scythe
Athwart the dew drawn and withdrawn,
The noisy peacock on the lawn,
These, and the sun's eye-gladding gleam,
This morning, chased the sweetest dream
That e'er shed penitential grace
On life's forgetful commonplace ;
Yet 't was no sweeter than the spell
To which I woke to say farewell.

Noon finds me ninety miles removed
From her who must not be beloved ;
And us the whole sea soon shall part,

Heaving for aye without a heart !
But why, dear mother, warn me so ?
I love Miss Churchill ? Ah, no, no !
I view, enchanted, from afar,
And love her as I love a star.
For, not to speak of colder fear,
Which keeps my fancy calm, I hear,
Under her life's gay progress hurl'd,
The wheels of the preponderant world,
Set sharp with swords that fool to slay
Who blunders from a poor byway,
To covet beauty with a crown
Of earthly blessing added on ;
And she's so much, it seems to me,
Beyond all women womanly,
I dread to think how he should fare
Who came so near as to despair.

No more of this ! Dear mother, please
To send my books to Plymouth. These,
When I go hence, shall turn all hours

To profit, and amend my powers.
I've time on board to fill my post,
And yet make up for schooling lost
Through young sea-service. They all
speak

German and French ; and these, with
Greek,

Which Doctor Churchill thought I knew,
And History, which I'm ill in too,
Will stop a gap I somewhat dread,
After the happy life I've led
Among my cousins ; and 't will be
To abridge the space from them to me.

Yonder the fullen vessel rides
Where my obscure condition hides.
Waves scud to shore against the wind,
That flings the sprinkling surf behind ;
In port the bickering pennons show
Which way the ships would gladly go ;
Through Edgecumbe Park the rooted trees

Are tossing, reckless, in the breeze ;
On top of Edgecumbe's firm-set tower,
As foils, not foibles, of its power,
The light vanes do themselves adjust
To every veering of the gust :
By me alone may naught be given
To guidance of the airs of heaven ?
In battle or peace, in calm or storm,
Should I my daily task perform,
(Better a thousand times for love,)
Who should my secret soul reprove !

Mother, I've striven to conceal,
Yes, from myself, how much I feel ;
In vain. With tears my sight is dull,
My cousin makes my heart so full.
Her happy beauty makes a man
Long to lay down his life ! How can
Aught to itself seem thus enough,
When I have so much need thereof !
Blest is her place ! blissful is she ;

And I, departing, seem to be
Like the strange waif that comes to run
A few days flaming near the sun,
And carries back, through boundless night,
Its lessening memory of light.
O, my dear mother ! I confess
To a weak grief of homelessness,
Unfelt, save once, before. 'T is years
Since such a shower of girlish tears
Disgraced me ! But this wretched Inn,
At Plymouth, is so full of din,
Talkings and trampings to and fro.
And then my ship, to which I go
To-night, is no more home. I dread,
As strange, the life I long have led ;
And as, when first I went to school,
And found the horror of a rule,
Which only ask'd to be obey'd,
I lay and wept, of dawn afraid,
And thought, with bursting heart, of one

Who, from her little, wayward son,
Required obedience, but above
Obedience still regarded love,
So change I that enchanting place,
The abode of innocence and grace
And gayety without reproof,
For the black gun-deck's lowering roof,
Blind and inevitable law,
Which makes light duties burdens, awe
Which is not reverence, laughers gain'd
At cost of purities profaned,
And whatsoever most may stir
Remorseful passion towards her,
Whom to behold is to depart
From all defect of life and heart.

By her instructed what may be
The joy of true society,
Frightful is solitude ; yet 't is,
Compared with such infestation, blifs.
But, mother, I shall go on shore,

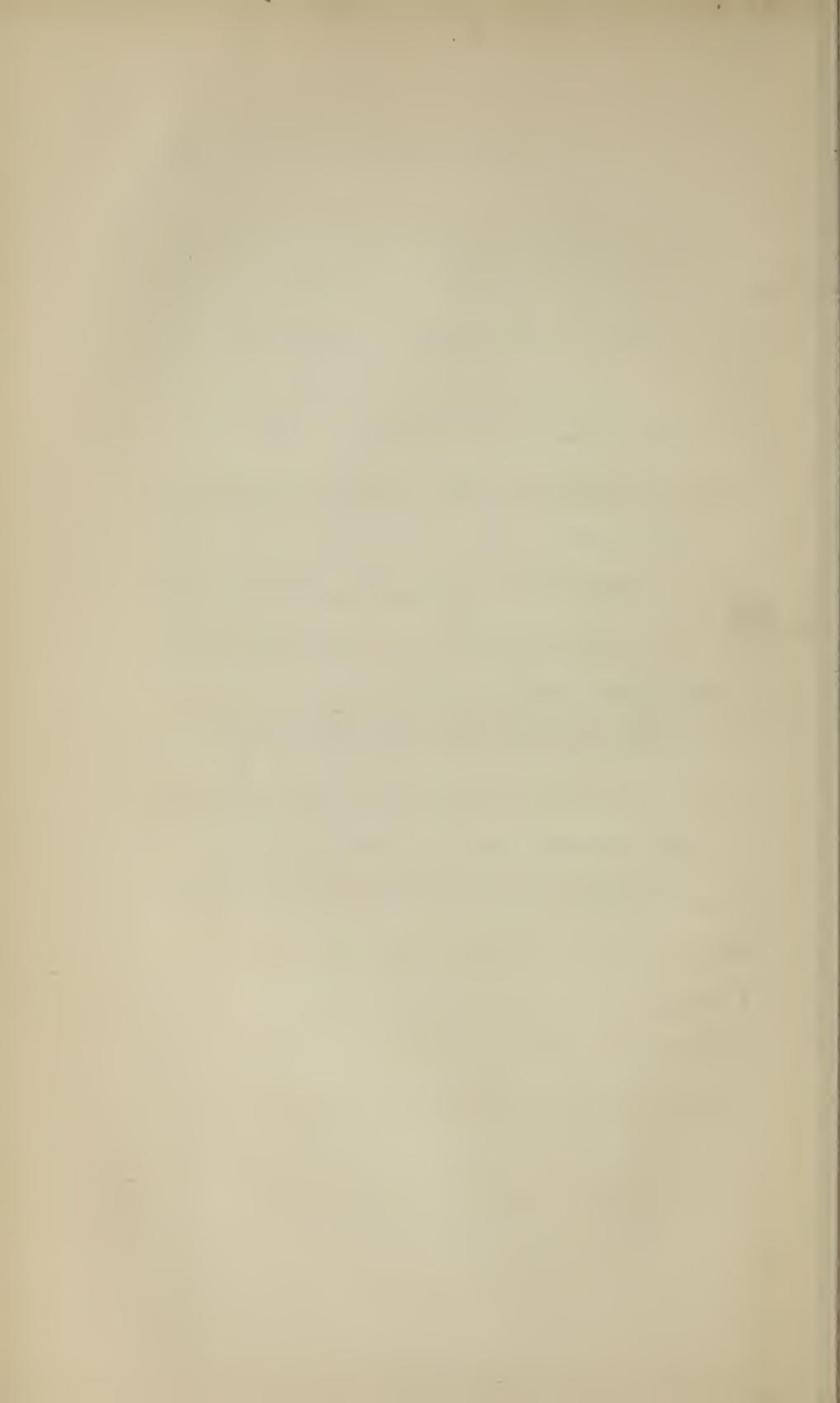
And see my Cousin yet once more !
'T were wild to hope for her, you say ?
I've torn and cast those words away.
Surely there's hope ! For life 't is well
Love without hope's impossible ;
So, if I love, it is that hope
Is not outside the outer scope
Of fancy. You speak truth : this hour,
I must resist, or lose the power.
What ! and, when some short months are
o'er,
Be not much other than before ?
Decline the high, harmonious sphere
In which I'm held, but while she's dear ?
In unrespective peace forget
Those eyes for which my own are wet
With that delicious, fruitful dew
Which, check'd, will never flow anew ?
For daily life's dull, senseless mood,
Slay the sharp nerves of gratitude

And sweet allegiance, which I owe,
Whether she cares for me or no ?
Nay, Mother, I, forewarn'd, prefer
To want for all in wanting her.

For all ? Love's best is not bereft
Ever from him to whom is left
The trust that God will not deceive
His creature, fashion'd to believe
The prophecies of pure desire.
Not loss, not death, my love shall tire.
A mystery does my heart foretell ;
Nor do I press the oracle
For explanations. Leave me alone,
And let in me love's will be done.

IV.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FASHION'D by Heaven and by art
So is she, that she makes the heart
Ache and o'erflow with tears, that grace
So wonderful should have for place
The unworthy earth ! To see her smile,
As ignorant of her hap the while,
And walk this howling waste of sin,
As only knowing the heaven within,
Is sweet, and does for pity stir
Passion to be her minister ;
Wherfore last night I lay awake,
And said, "Ah, Lord ! for thy love's sake,
Give not this darling child of thine

To care less reverent than mine!"

And, as true faith was in my word,
I trust, I trust that I was heard.

The waves, this morning, sped to land,
And shouted hoarse to touch the strand,
Where Spring, that goes not out to sea,
Lay laughing in her lovely glee ;
And, so, my life was sunlit spray
And tumult, as, once more to-day,
For long farewell did I draw near
My Cousin desperately dear.
Faint, fierce, the truth that hope was
none

Gleam'd like the lightning in the sun ;
Yet, hope I had, and joy thereof !
The father of love is hope, (though love
Lives orphan'd on, when hope is dead,)
And, out of my immediate dread
And crisis of the coming hour,
Did hope itself draw sudden power.

So the hot-brooding storm, in Spring,
Makes all the birds begin to sing.

Mother, your foresight did not err :
I've lost the world, and not won her.
And yet, ah, laugh not, when you think
What cup of life I sought to drink !
The bold, said I, have climb'd to bliss
Absurd, impossible, as this,
With naught to help them but so great
A heart it fascinates their fate.
If ever Heaven back'd man's desire,
Mine, being smirchless altar-fire,
Must come to pass, and it will be
That she will wait, when she shall see,
This evening, how I go to get
By means unknown I know not yet
Quite what, but ground whereon to stand,
And plead more plainly for her hand !

While thus I raved, and cast in hope
A superstitious horoscope,

I reach'd the Dean's. The woman said,
"Miss Churchill's out." "Had she been
dead,"

I cried, "'t were much the same to me,
Who go, this very night, to sea."

"Nay, sir, she's only gone to prayer;
And here she comes, across the Square."
(O, but to be the unbanished fod
She daily treads, all bright from God!)

And now, though something in her face
Portended "No!" with such a grace
It burthen'd me with thankfulness,
Nothing was credible but "Yes!"
Therefore, through time's close pressure
bold,

I praised myself, and boastful told
My deeds at Acre, strained the chance
I had of honour and advance
In war to come; and would not see
Sad silence meant "What's this to me!"

When half my precious hour was gone,
She rose to greet a Mr. Vaughan ;
And, as the image of the moon
Breaks up, within some still lagoon
That feels the soft wind suddenly,
Or tide fresh flowing from the sea,
And turns to giddy flames that go
Over the water to and fro,
Thus, when he took her hand to-night,
Her lovely gravity of light
Was scattered into many smiles
And flattering weakness. Hope beguiles
No more my heart, dear Mother. He,
By jealous looks, o'erhonour'd me !

With naught to do, and fondly fain
To hear her singing once again,
I stay'd, and turn'd her music o'er ;
Then came she with me to the door.
“ Dearest Honoria,” I said,
(By my despair familiar made,

“Heaven bleſſ you!” O, to have back
then ſtepp’d,

And fall’n upon her neck, and wept,
And ſaid, “My friend, I owe you all
I am, and have, and hope for. Call
For ſome poor ſervice; let me prove
To you, or him here whom you love,
My duty. Any ſolemn task,
For life’s whole course, is all I ask!”
Then ſhe muſt ſurely have wept too,
And ſaid, “My friend, what can you
do?”

And I ſhould have replied, “I’ll pray
For you and him three times a day,
And, all day, morning, noon, and night,
My life ſhall be ſo high and right
That never Saint yet ſcaled the stairs
Of heaven with more availing prayers!”
But this, (and, as good God shall bleſſ
Somehow my end, I’ll do no less,) . . .

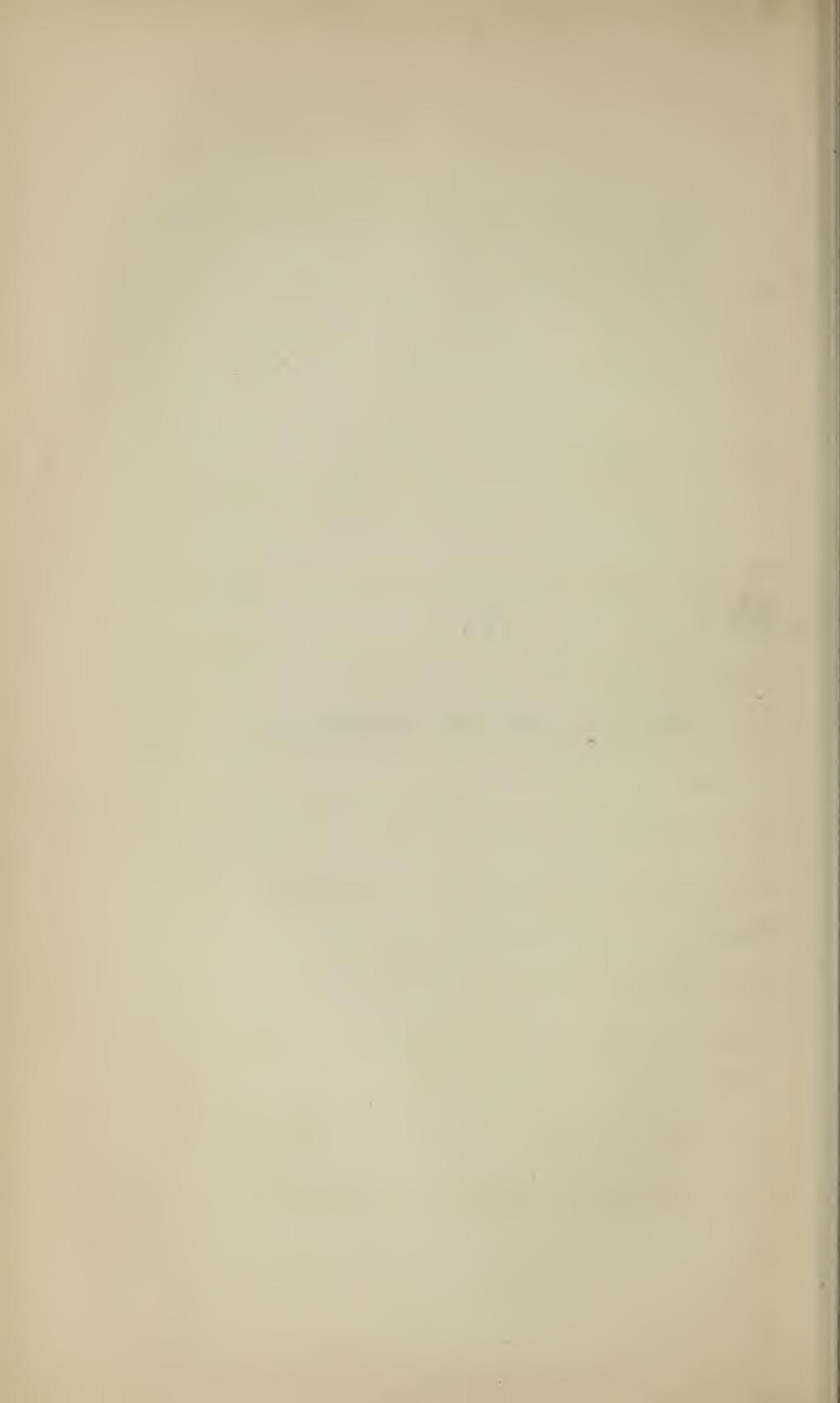
I had no right to speak. Oh, shame,
So rich a love, so poor a claim !

My Mother, now my only friend,
Farewell. The school-books which you
send

I shall not want, and so return.
Give them away, or sell, or burn.
Address to Malta. Would I might
But be your little Child to-night,
And feel your arms about me fold,
Against this loneliness and cold !

V.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.



MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MY own dear Child, Honoria's choice
Shows what she is, and I rejoice
You did not win her. Felix Vaughan
Preferr'd to you? My faith is gone
In her fine sense! And, thus, you see
You were too good for her! Ah, me,
The folly of these girls: they doff
Their pride to sleek success, and scoff
At far more noble fire and might
That woo them from the dust of fight!

But now, Dear, since the storm is past,
Your sky should not remain o'ercast.
A sea life's dull, and, so, beware

Of nourishing, for zest, despair.
Remember, Frederick, this makes twice
You've been in love; then why not thrice,
Or ten times? But a wise man shuns
To say "All's over" more than once.
Religion, duty, books, work, friends,
Are anodynes, if not amends.
I'll not urge that a young man's soul
Is scarce the measure of the whole
Earthly and heavenly universe,
To which he inveterately prefers
The one beloved woman. Best
Speak to the fenses' interest,
Which brooks no mystery nor delay:
Frankly reflect, my Son, and say,
Was there no secret hour, of those
Pass'd at her side in Sarum Close,
When, to your spirit's sick alarm,
It seem'd that all her marvellous charm
Was marvellously fled? The cause

'T is like you sought not. This it was :
It happen'd, for that hour, her grace
Of voice, adornment, posture, face
Was what already heart and eye
Had ponder'd to satiety ;
And so the good of life was o'er,
Until some laugh not heard before,
Some novel fashion in her hair,
Or style of putting back her chair,
Restored the heavens. Gather thence
The loss-consoling inference !

I blame not beauty. It beguiles,
With lovely motions and sweet smiles,
Which while they please us pass away,
The spirit to lofty thoughts that stay,
And lift the whole of after-life,
Unless you take the thing to wife,
Which then seems naught, or serves to
 flake
Desire, as when a lovely lake

Far oft scarce fills the exulting eye
Of one athirst, who comes thereby,
And inappreciably sips
The deep, with disappointed lips.
To fail is sorrow, yet confess
That love pays dearly for success !
I blame not beauty, but complain
Of the heart, which can so ill sustain
Delight. Our griefs declare our Fall,
But how much more our joys ! They pall
With plucking, and celestial mirth
Can find no footing on the earth,
More than the bird of paradise,
Which only lives the while it flies.

Think, also, how 't would suit your
pride

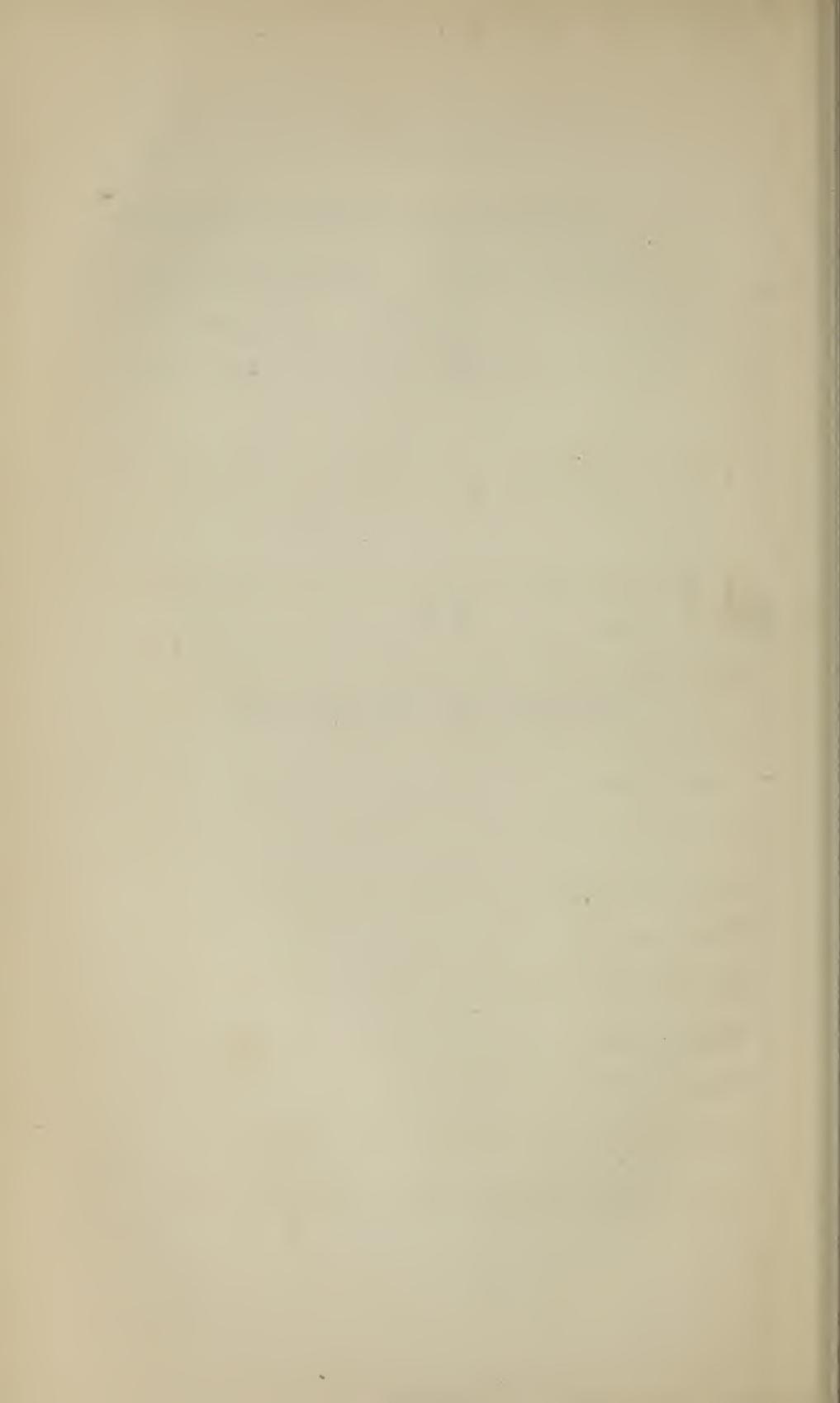
To have this woman for a bride.
Whate'er her faults, she's one of those
To whom the world's last polish owes
A further grace, which all who aspire

To courtliest custom must acquire.
The world's her duty and her sphere ;
But you have still been lonely, Dear.
(Oh, law perverse, that loneliness
Breeds love, society success !)
Though young, 'twere now o'er late in
life
To train yourself for such a wife ;
So she would fit herself to you,
As women, when they marry, do.
For, since 't is for their dignity
Their lords should fit like lords on high,
They willingly deteriorate
To a step below their rulers' state ;
And 't is the commonest of things
To see an angel, gay with wings,
Lean weakly on a mortal's arm !
Honoria would put off the charm
Of cultured grace that caught your love,
For fear you should not seem above

Herself in fashion and degree,
As in true merit. Thus, you see,
'T were little kindness, wisdom none,
To light your barn with such a fun.

V I.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

DEAR Mother, do not write her name
With the least word or hint of blame.
Who else shall discommend her choice,
I giving it my hearty voice ?
She marry me ? I loved too well
To think it good or possible.
Ah, never near her beauties come
The busines of the narrow home !
Far fly from her dear face, that shows
The sunshine lovelier than the rose,
The sordid gravity they wear
Who poverty's base burthen bear !
(And they are poor who come to miss

Their custom, though a crown be this.)
My hope was, that the wheels of fate,
For my exceeding need, might wait,
And she, unseen amidst all eyes,
Move sightless, till I sought the prize,
With honour, in an equal field.

But then came Vaughan, to whom I yield
With grace as much as any man,
In such cause, to another can.

Had she been mine, it seems to me
That I had that integrity
And only joy in her delight—
But each is his own favourite
In love ! The thought to bring me rest
Is that of us she takes the best.

"T was but to see him to be sure
That choice for her remain'd no more !
His brow, so gayly clear of craft ;
His wit, the timely truth that laugh'd
To find itself so well express'd ;

His words, abundant yet the best ;
His spirit, of such handsome show
You saw not that his looks were so ;
His bearing, prospects, birth, all these
Might well, with small suit, greatly please ;
How greatly, when she saw arise
The reflex sweetnes of her eyes
In his, and every breath defer
Humbly its bated life to her ;
Whilst power and kindness of command,
Which women can no more withstand
Than we their grace, were still unquell'd,
And force and flattery both compell'd
Her softness ! Say I'm worthy. I
Grew, in her presence, cold and shy.
It awed me, as an angel's might
In raiment of reproachful light.
Her gay looks told my sombre mood
That what's not happy is not good ;
And, just because 't was life to please,

Death to repel her, truth and ease
Deserted me ; I strove to talk,
And stammered foolishness ; my walk
Was like a drunkard's ; once she took
My arm ; it stiffen'd, ached, and shook ;
I guess'd her thought, and could have
dropp'd ;

The streams of life within me stopp'd.
A likely wooer ! Blame her not ;
Nor ever say, dear Mother, aught
Against that perfectness which is
My strength, as once it was my bliss.

Nor let us chafe at social rules.
Leave that to poets and to fools.
Clay graffs and clods conceive the rose,
So base still fathers best. Life owes
Itself to bread ; enough thereof
And easy days condition love ;
And, highly train'd, love's roses thrive,
No more pale, scentless petals five,

Which moisten the considerate eye
To see what haste they make to die,
But heavens of brightness and perfume,
Which, month by month, renew the bloom
Of art-born graces, when the year
In all the natural grove is fere.

Thank God, I partly can descry
The meaning of humanity !
In sight of him who sees it float
As many an ifolated mote
In accidental light or dark,
And wants the instructed sense to mark
Its method, and the ear to hear
The moving music of its sphere,
What wonder if his private loss
Seems an intolerable cross,
Not to be suffer'd, in mere awe
Of what he calls the world's cold law ?
But he who once, with joy of soul,
Has had the vision of the whole,

Though to the wringing of his heart,
Will never more prefer the part.
Blame none, then ! Bright let be the air .
About my lonely cloud of care.

It seems 't is rather in his thumbs !)
To work is well, nay, labour is,
They say, the bread of souls. If 't is,
We do not worship corn and yeast ;
Indeed, they scarcely make a feast !
Bread's needful, but the rule stands so
That needful most is oft most low.
I act my calling, yet there's still
A void which duty cannot fill.
What though the inaugural hour of right
Comes ever with a keen delight !
Little relieves the labour's heat,
Or crowns the labour when complete ;
And life, in fact, is not less dull
For being very dutiful.
“The stately homes of England,” lo,
“How beautiful they stand !” They owe
How much to me and such as me
Their beauty of security !
But who can long a low work mend

By looking to a lofty end ?
And let me, since 't is truth, confess
The want's not filled by godliness.
God is a tower without a stair,
And His perfection love's despair.
'T is he shall judge me when I die ;
He tickles with the hissing fly
The spider ; gazes patient down,
Whilst rapine grips the helpless town.
His vast love holds all this and more.
In consternation I adore !
Nor can I ease this aching gulf
With friends, the pictures of myself.
Then marvel not that I recur
From each and all of these to her.
For more of heaven than her have I
No sensitive capacity.
Had I but her, ah, what the gain
Of owning aught but that domain !
Nay, heaven's extent, however much,

Cannot be more than many such ;
And, she being mine, should God to me
Say, “Lo ! my Child, I give to thee
All heaven besides,” what could I then,
But, as a child, to Him complain
That, whereas my dear Father gave
A little space for me to have
In his great garden, now, o’erblest,
I’ve that, indeed, but all the rest,
Which, somehow, makes it seem I’ve got
All but my only cared-for plot.
Enough was that for my weak hand
To tend, my heart to understand.

Oh, the sick thought, ’twixt her and me
There’s nothing, and the weary sea !

VII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

MOTHER, in scarcely two hours more
I set my foot on English shore,
Two years untrod ! and, strange to tell,
Nigh miss'd, through last night's storm.

There fell
A man from the shrouds, that roar'd to
quench
Even the billows' blast and drench.
None else but me was by to mark
His loud cry in the louder dark,
Dark, save when lightning show'd the
deep
Standing about in stony heaps.

No time for choice ! A fortunate flash
Flamed as he rose ; a dizzy splash,
A strange, inopportune delight
Of mounting with the billowy might,
And falling, with a thrill again
Of pleasure shot from feet to brain,
And both paced deck, ere any knew
Our peril. Round us press'd the crew.
“ Your duty was to let him drown,”
The Captain said, and feign'd a frown ;
But wonder fill'd the eyes of most.
As if the man who had loved and lost
Honoria dared no more than that !

My days have else been stale and flat.
This life's, at best, if justly scann'd,
A tedious walk by the other's strand,
With, here and there cast up, a piece
Of coral or of ambergris,
Which boasted of abroad, we ignore
The burthen of the barren shore.

Often might I my letters fill
With how the nerves refuse to thrill ;
How, throughout doubly-darken'd days,
I cannot recollect her face ;
How to my heart her name to tell
Is beating on a broken bell ;
And, to fill up the abhorrent gulf,
Scarce loving her, I hate myself.

Yet, latterly, with strange delight,
Rich tides have risen in the night,
And sweet dreams chased the fancies dense
Of waking life's dull somnolence.
I see her as I knew her, grace
Already glory in her face ;
I move about, I cannot rest,
For the proud brain and joyful breast
I have of her. Or else I float
The pilot of an idle boat,
Alone with sun, and sky, and sea,
And her, the fourth simplicity.

Or Mildred, to some question, cries,
(Her merry mischief in her eyes,) "The Ball, oh, Frederick will go ;
Honoria will be there!" and, lo,
As moisture sweet my seeing blurs
To hear my name so link'd with hers,
A mirror joins, by guilty chance,
Either's averted, watchful glance !
Or with me, in the Ball-Room's blaze,
Her brilliant mildness thrids the maze ;
Our thoughts are lovely, and each word
Is music in the music heard,
And all things seem but parts to be
Of one persistent harmony,
By which I'm made divinely bold ;
The secret, which she knows, is told ;
And, laughing with a lofty bliss
Of innocent accord, we kiss ;
About her neck my pleasure weeps ;
Against my lip the silk vein leaps ;

Then says an Angel, “ Day or night,
If yours you seek, not her delight,
Although by some strange witchery
It seems you kiss her, ’t is not she ;
But whilst you languish at the side
Of a fair-foul phantasmal bride,
Surely a dragon and strong tower
Guard the true lady in her bower.”

And I say, “ Dear my Lord, Amen ! ”
And the true lady kiss again.
Or else some wasteful malady
Devours her shape and dims her eye ;
No charms are left, where all were rife,
Except her voice, which is her life,
Wherewith she, for her foolish fear,
Says trembling, “ Do you love me, Dear ? ”
And I reply, “ Ah, Sweet, I vow
I never loved but half till now.”

She turns her face to the wall at this,
And says, “ Go, Love, ’t is too much bliss.”

And then a sudden pulse is sent
About the sounding firmament
In smitings as of silver bars ;
The bright disorder of the stars
Is solved by music ; far and near,
Through infinite distinctions clear,
Their two-fold voices' deeper tone
Thunders the Name which all things
own,

And each ecstatic treble dwells
On one whereof none other tells ;
And we, sublimed to song and fire,
Take order in the wheeling quire,
Till from the throbbing sphere I start,
Waked by the beating of my heart.

Such dreams as these come night by
night,
Disturbing day with their delight.
Portend they nothing ? Who can tell !
God yet may do some miracle.

'T is now two years, and she's not wed,
Or you would know ! He may be dead,
Or mad and wooing some one else,
And she, much moved that nothing quells
My constancy, or, merely wroth
With such a wretch, accept my troth
To spite him ; or her beauty's gone,
(And that's my dream !) and this vile

Vaughan

Takes her release ; or tongues malign,
Convincing all men's ears but mine,
Have smirch'd her : ah, 't would move
her, sure,

To find I only worshipp'd more !

Nay, now I think, haply amifs
I read her words and looks, and his,
That night ! Did not his jealousy
Show — Good my God, and can it be
That I, a modest fool, all blest,
Nothing of such a heaven gueff'd ?

Oh, chance too frail, yet frantic sweet.
To-morrow fees me at her feet !

Yonder, at last, the glad sea roars
Along the sacred English shores !
There lies the lovely land I know,
Where men and women lordliest grow ;
There peep the roofs where more than
kings

Postpone state cares to country things, . . .
And many a gay queen simply tends
The babes on whom the world depends ;
There curls the wanton cottage smoke
Of him that drives but bears no yoke ;
There laughs the realm where low and
high

Are lieges to society,
And life has all too wide a scope, . . .
Too free a prospect for its hope,
For any private good or ill,
Except dishonour, quite to fill !

Postscript. Since this was penn'd, I read
That "Mr. Vaughan, on Tuesday, wed
The beautiful Miss Churchill." So
That's over ; and to-morrow I go
To take up my new post on board
The Wolf, my peace at last restored,
For all the showering tears that soak
This paper. Grief is now the cloak
I fold about me to prevent
The deadly chill of a content
With any near or distant good,
Except the exact beatitude
Which love has shown to my desire.
You'll point to "other joys and higher."
I hate and disavow all blifs
As none for me which is not this.
Think not I blasphemously cope
With God's decrees, and cast off hope.
How, when, and where can mine succeed?
I'll trust He knows who made my need !

VIII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

I THOUGHT the worst had brought
me balm,
'T was but the tempest's central calm.
Vague sinkings of the heart aver
That dreadful wrong has come to her,
And o'er this whim I brood and doat,
And learn its agonies by rote.
As if I loved it, early and late
I make familiar with my fate,
And feed, with fascinated will,
On very dregs of finish'd ill.
I think, she's near him now, alone,
With wardship and protection none ;

Alone, perhaps, in the hindering stress
Of airs that clasp him with her dress,
They wander whispering by the wave ;
And haply now, in some sea-cave
Where the salt sand is rarely trod,
They laugh, they kiss. O God ! O God !

Baseness of men ! Pursuit being o'er,
Doubtless the Lover feels no more
The awful heaven of such a Bride,
But, lounging, let's her please his pride
With fondness, guerdons her caress
With little names, and twists a tress
Round idle fingers. If 't is so,
Why then I'm happier of the two !
Better, for lofty loss, like pain,
Than low content with lofty gain.
Poor, foolish Dove, to trust from me
Her happiness and dignity !

Thus, all day long till frightful night
I fear she's harm'd by his delight,

And when I lay me down at even
'T is Hades lit with neighbouring Heaven.
There comes a smile acutely sweet
Out of the picturing dark ; I meet
The ancient frankness of her gaze,
That simple, bold, and living blaze
Of great good-will and innocence,
And perfect joy proceeding thence !
Ah ! made for Earth's delight, yet such
The mid-sea air's too gross to touch.
At thought of which, the soul in me
Is as the bird that bites a bee,
And darts abroad on frantic wing,
Taunting the honey and the sting ;
And, moaning where all round me sleep
Amidst the moaning of the deep,
I start at midnight from my bed —
And have no right to strike him dead.

What world is this that I am in,
Where chance turns sanctity to sin !

'T is crime henceforward to desire
The only good, the sacred fire
Of all the universe is hell !

I hear a Voice that argues well :

"The Heaven hard has scorn'd your cry ;
Fall down and worship me, and I
Will give you peace ; go and profane
This pangful love, so pure, so vain,
And thereby win forgetfulness
And pardon of the spirit's excess,
Which soar'd too nigh that jealous Heaven
Ever, save thus, to be forgiven.

No Gospel has come down that cures
With better gain a loss like yours.

Be pious ! Give the beggar pelf,
And love your neighbour as yourself !
You, who yet love, though all is o'er,
And she'll ne'er be your neighbour more,
With soul which can in pity smile
That aught with such a measure vile

As self should be at all named ‘love !’
Your sanctity the priests reprove,
Your case of grief they wholly miss.
The Man of Sorrows names not this !
‘The years,’ they say, ‘graft love divine
On the lopp’d stock of love like thine,
The wild tree dies not, but converts.’
So be it ; but the lopping hurts,
The graff takes tardily ! Men stanch
Meantime with earth the bleeding branch.
There’s nothing heals one woman’s loss,
And lightens life’s eternal cross
With intermission of sound rest,
Like lying in another’s breast.
The cure is, to your thinking, low !
Is not life all, henceforward, so ?”

Ill Voice, at least thou calm’st my mood ;
I’ll sleep ! But, as I thus conclude,
The intrusions of her grace dispel
The comfortable glooms of hell.

A wonder ! Ere these lines were dried,
Vaughan and my Love, his three-days'
Bride,

Became my guests. I look'd, and, lo !
In beauty soft as is the snow
And powerful as the avalanche,
She lit the deck. The Heav'n-sent chance !
She smiled, surprised. They came to
fee

The ship, not thinking to meet me.
At infinite distance she's my day !
What then to him ? Howbeit they say
'T is not so sunny in the sun
But men might live cool lives thereon !

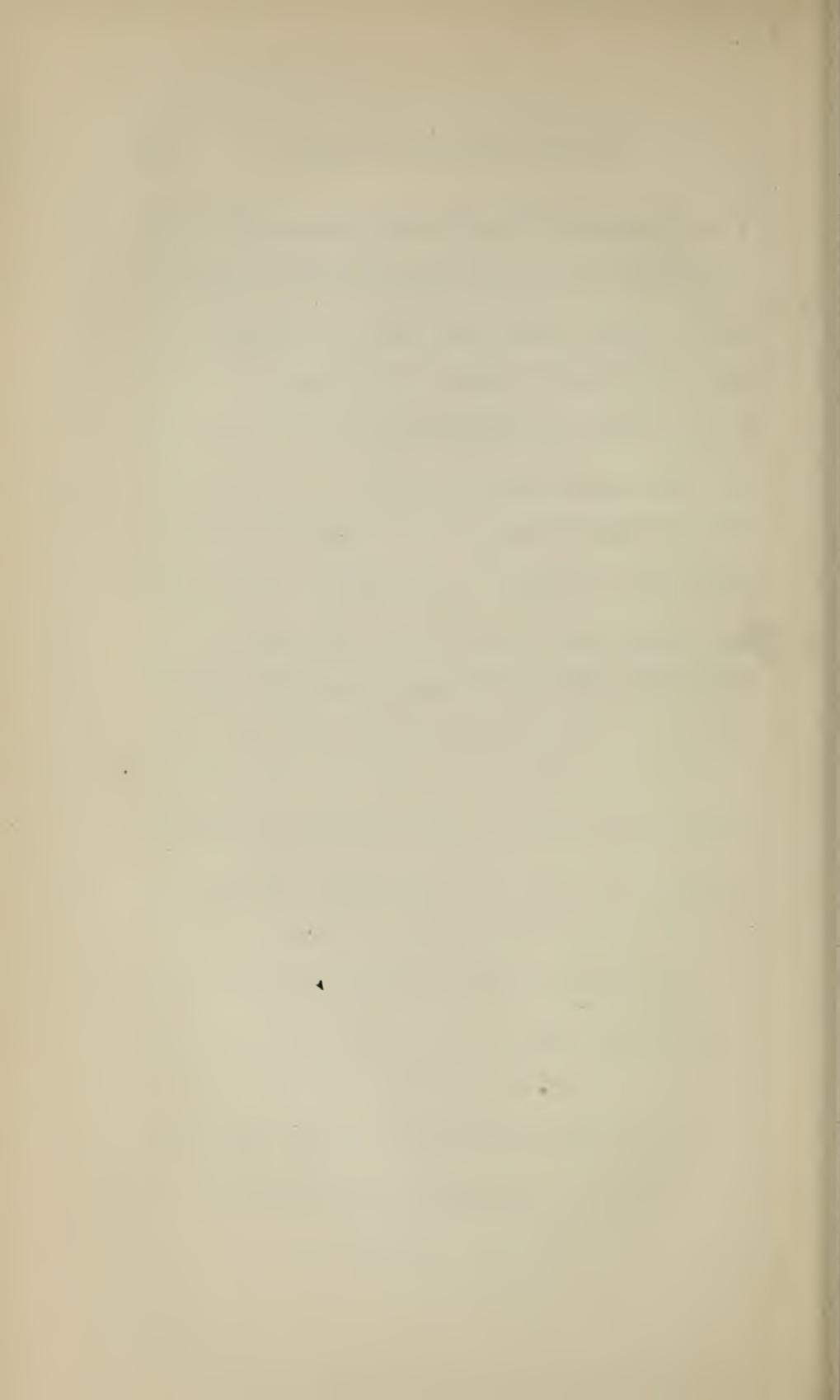
All's well ; for I have seen arise
That reflex sweetnes of her eyes
In his, and watch'd his breath defer
Humbly its bated life to her,
His *wife*. Dear Love, she's safe in his
Devotion ; and the thought of this,

Though more than ever I admire,
Removes her out of my desire.

They bade adieu ; I saw them go
Across the sea ; and now I know
The ultimate hope I rested on,
The hope beyond the grave, is gone,
The hope that, in the heavens high,
At last it should appear that I
Loved most, and so, by claim divine,
Should have her, in the heavens, for mine,
According to such nuptial sort
As may subsist in the holy court,
Where, if there are all kinds of joys
To exhaust the multitude of choice
In many mansions, then there are
Loves personal and particular,
Conspicuous in the glorious sky
Of universal charity,
As Hesper in the sunrise. Now
I've seen them, I believe their vow

Immortal ; and the dreadful thought,
That he less honour'd than he ought
Her sanctity, is laid to rest,
And, blessing them, I too am blest.
My good-will, as a springing air,
Unclouds a beauty in despair ;
I stand beneath the sky's pure cope
Unburthen'd even by a hope ;
And peace unspeakable, a joy
Which hope would deaden and destroy,
Like sunshine fills the airy gulf
Left by the vanishing of self.
That I have known her ; that she moves
Somewhere all-graceful ; that she loves,
And is belov'd, and that she's so
Most happy ; and to heaven will go,
Where I may meet with her, (yet this
I count but adventitious bliss,)
And that the full, celestial weal
Of all shall sensitively feel

The partnership and work of each,
And, thus, my love and labour reach
Her region, there the more to bless
Her last, consummate happiness,
Is guerdon up to the degree
Of that alone true loyalty
Which, sacrificing, is not nice
About the terms of sacrifice,
But offers all, with smiles that say,
'T were nothing if 't were not for aye !



BOOK II.

J A N E.

I.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

I WEEP for your great grief, dear Boy,
And not less for your lofty joy.
You wanted her, my Son, for wife,
With the fierce need of life in life !
That nobler passion of an hour
Was rather prophecy than power ;
And nature, from such stress unbent,
Recurs to deep discouragement.
Trust not such peace yet ; easy breath,
In hot diseases, argues death ;
And tastelessness within the mouth
Worse fever shows than heat or drouth.
Wherefore take timely warning, Dear,

Against a novel danger near.
Beware lest that “ill Voice” once more
Should plead, not vainly as before.
Wed not one woman, O my Son,
Because you love another one !
Oft, with a disappointed man,
The first who cares to win him can ;
For, after love’s heroic strain,
Which tired the heart and brought no
gain,
He feels consoled, relieved, and eased
To meet with her who can be pleased
To proffer kindness, and compute
His acquiescence for pursuit ;
Who troubles not his lonely mood ;
Asks naught for love but gratitude ;
And, as it were, will let him weep
Himself within her arms to sleep.
Ah, desperate folly ! (Though, we know,
Who wed through love wed mostly so.)

Before all else, when wed you do,
See that the woman equals you,
Nor rush, from having loved too high,
Into a worse humility.
Whose Child, whose *Cousin* are you? Wait
Until this blast shall well abate!
Though love may seem to have wreck'd
your life,
Look to the salvage; take no wife
Who to your stooping feels she owes
Her name; such debts make bosom-foes.
A poor estate's a foolish plea
For marrying to a base degree.
A gentlewoman's twice as cheap,
As well as pleasanter, to keep.
Nor think grown women can be train'd,
Or, if they could, that much were gain'd;
For never was a man's heart caught
By graces he himself had taught.
And fancy not 't is in the might

Of man to do without delight ;
For should you in her nothing find
To exhilarate the higher mind,
Your soul will clog its useles^s wings
With wickedness of lawful things,
And vampire pleasure swift destroy
Even the memory of joy.
So let no man, in desperate mood,
Wed a dull girl because she's good.
All virtues in his wife soon dim,
Except the power of pleasing him,
Which may small virtue be, or none !

I know, my just and tender Son,
To whom the dangerous grace is given
That scorns a good which is not heaven ;
My Child, who used to sit and sigh
Under the bright, ideal sky,
And pass, to spare the farmer's wheat,
The poppy and the meadow-sweet !
He would not let his wife's heart ache

For what was mainly his mistake ;
But, having err'd so, all his force
Would fix upon the hard right course.

I see you with a vulgar wife !
Or one absorb'd in *future* life,
And in this transitory place
Contented with the *means* of grace ;
Uncultured, say, yet good and true,
And therefore inward fair, and, through
The veils which inward beauty swathe,
All lovely to the eye of faith !
Ah, that's soon fagged ; faith falls away,
Without the ceremonial stay
Of outward loveliness and awe.
The weightier matters of the law
She pays ; mere mint and cumin not ;
And, in the road that she was taught,
She treads, and takes for granted still
Nature's immedicable ill ;
So never wears within her eyes

A false report of paradise,
Nor ever modulates her mirth
With vain compassion of the earth,
Which made a certain happier face
Affecting, and a gayer grace
With pathos delicately edged !
Yet, though she be not privileged
To unlock for you your heart's delight,
(Her keys being gold, but not the right,)
On lower levels she may do !
Her joy is more in loving you
Than being loved, and she commands
All tenderneſs she understands.
It is but when you proffer more,
The yoke weighs heavy and chafes sore.
It's weary work enforcing love
On one who has enough thereof,
And honour on the lowlihead
Of ignorance ! Besides, you dread,
In Leah's arms, to meet the eyes

Of Rachel somewhere in the skies,
And both return, alike relieved,
To life less loftily conceived.
Alas, alas !

Then wait the mood
In which a woman may be woo'd
Whose thoughts and habits are too high
For honour to be flattery ;
And such would surely not allow
The suit that you could proffer now.
Her equal yoke would fit with ease ;
It might, with wearing, even please,
(Not with a better word to move
The indignant loyalty of love !)
She would not mope when you were
 gay,
For want of knowing aught to say ;
Nor vex you with unhandsome waste
Of thoughts ill-timed and words ill-
 placed ;

Nor hold small things for duties small,
(This brands ill-breeding most of all,)
But, gilding uses with delight,
And comprehending nature right,
Would mend or veil each weaker part
With some sweet supplement of art.
Nor would she bring you up a brood
Of strangers bound to you by blood,
Boys of a meaner moral race,
Girls with their mother's evil grace,
But not her right to sometimes find
Her critic past his judgment kind ;
Nor, unaccustom'd to respect,
Which men, where 't is not claim'd,
neglect,
Confirm you selfish and morose,
And slowly by contagion grofs ;
But, glad and able to receive
The honour you would long to give,
Would hasten on to justify

Your hope of her, however high,
Whilst you would happily incur
Compulsion to keep up with her.

Past price is such a woman, yet
Not rare, nor hard for *you* to get ;
And such, in marrying, yields so much
It could not less than greatly touch
The heart of him who call'd her Bride,
With tenderness, and manly pride,
And soft, protective, fond regard,
And thoughts to make no duty hard.

Your love was wild, (but none the less
Praise be to love, whose wild excess
Reveals the honour and the height
Of life, and the supreme delight
In store for all but him who lies
Content in mediocrities !)
To wed with one less loved may be
Part of divine expediency.
Many men cannot love ; more yet

Cannot love such as they can get,
Who still should marry, and do, and find
Comfort of heart and peace of mind
More than when love-sick spirits dull
The force of manhood masterful,
Which woman's softnesses require,
And women ever most admire.

II.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

YOUR letter, Mother, bears the date
 Of six months back, and comes too
 late.

My Love, past all conceiving lost,
A change seem'd good, at any cost,
From lonely, stupid, silent grief,
Vain, objectless, beyond relief,
And like a sea-fog settled dense
On fancy, feeling, thought, and sense.
I grew so idle, so despised
Myself, my powers, by her unprized ;
Honouring my post, but nothing more ;
And lying, when I lived on shore,

So late of mornings ; sharp tears stream'd
For such slight cause,— if only gleam'd,
Remotely, sorrowfully bright,
On clouded eves at sea, the light
Of English headlands in the sun,—
That soon I deem'd 't were better done
To lay this poor, complaining wraith
Of unreciprocated faith ;
And so, with heart still bleeding quick,
But strengthen'd by the comfort sick
Of knowing that *she* could not care,
I turn'd my back on my despair ;
And told our chaplain's daughter, Jane,—
A dear, good Girl, who saw my pain,
And spoke as if she pitied me,—
How glad and thankful I should be
If some kind woman, not above
Myself in rank, would give her love
To one that knew not how to woo.
Wheretoat she, without more ado,

Blush'd, spoke of love return'd, and closed
With what I meant to have proposed.

And, trust me, Mother, I and Jane
Suit one another well. My gain
Is very great in this good wife,
To whom I'm bound, for natural life,
By hearty faith, yet crossing not
My faith towards — I know not what !
As to the ether is the air,
Is her good to Honoria's fair ;
One place is full of both, yet each
Lies quite beyond the other's reach
And recognition. Star and star,
Rays crossing, closer rivals are,
Sequester'd in their separate spheres.
And now, except some casual tears,
The old grief lives not. If you say,
Am I contented ? Yea and nay !
For what's base but content to grow
With less good than the best we know ?

But think me not from sense withdrawn
By passion for a hope that's gone,
So far as to forget how much
A woman is, as merely such,
To man's affection. What is best,
In each, belongs to all the rest ;
And though, in marriage, quite to kiss
And half to love the custom is,
'T is such dishonour, ruin bare,
The soul's interior despair,
And life between two troubles toss'd,
To me, who think not with the most ;
Whatever 't would have been before
My Cousin's time, 't is now so sore
A treason to the abiding throne
Of that sweet love which I have known,
I cannot live so, and I bend
My mind perforce to comprehend
That He who gives command to love
Does not require a thing above

The strength he gives. The highest degree

Of the hardest grace, humility ;
The step t'wards heaven the latest trod,
And that which makes us most like God,
And us much more than God behoves,
Is, to be humble in our loves.

Henceforth forever therefore I
Renounce all partiality
Of passion. Subject to control
Of that perspective of the soul
Which God himself pronounces good,
Confirming claims of neighbourhood,
And giving man, for earthly life,
The closest neighbour in a wife,
I'll serve all. Jane be much more dear
Than others as she's much more near !

Is one unlovable, and would
We love him, let us do him good !
How easy, then, the effect to raise

Where naught's amiss but homely ways.
I love her, love her ! Sweet tears come
Of this my self-will's martyrdom ;
And sweet tears are love's test, for love
Is naught without the joy thereof.

Yet, not to lie for God, 't is true
That 't was another joy I knew
When freighted was my heart with fire
Of fond, irrational desire
For fascinating, female charms,
And hopeless heaven in two white arms.
"There's nothing half so sweet in life,"
As the old song says ; and I nor wife
Nor Heaven affront, if I profess,
That care for heaven with me were less
But that I'm utterly imbued
With faith of all Earth's good renew'd
In realms where no short-coming pains
Expectance, and dear love disdains
Time's treason, and the gathering drofs,

And lasts forever in the glofs
Of melting.

All the bright past seems,
Now, but a vision in my dreams,
Which shows, albeit the dreamer wakes,
The standard of right life. Life aches
To be therewith conform'd ; but, oh !
The world's so stolid, dark, and low !
That and the mortal element
Forbid its beautiful intent,
And, like the unborn butterfly,
It feels the wings, and wants the sky.

But perilous is the lofty mood
Which cannot pull with lowly good !
Right life, for me, is life that wends
By lowly ways to lofty ends.
I well perceive, at length, that haste
T'wards heaven itself is only waste .
And thus I dread the impatient spur
Of aught that speaks too plain of Her.

There's little here that story tells ;
But music talks of nothing else.
Therefore, when music breathes, I say,
(And busier urge my task,) Away !
Thou art the voice of one I knew,
But what thou say'st is not yet true ;
Thou art the voice of her I loved,
And I would not be vainly moved.

Thus love, which did from death set
free

All things, now dons death's mockery,
And takes its place with things that are
But little noted. Do not mar
For me your peace ! My health is high.
The proud possession of mine eye
Departed, I am much like one
Who had by haughty custom grown
To think gilt rooms, and spacious grounds,
Horses, and carriages, and hounds,
Fine linen, and an eider bed

As much his need as daily bread,
And honour of men as much or more ;
Till, strange misfortune smiting sore,
His pride all goes to pay his debts,
A lodging anywhere he gets,
And takes his wife and child thereto
Weeping, and other relics few,
Allow'd, by them that seize his pelf,
As precious only to himself.

But, soon, kind compensations, all
Unlook'd for, ease his cruel fall ;
The sun still shines ; the country green
Has many riches, poorly seen
From blazon'd coaches ; grace at meat
Goes well with thrift in what they eat ;
And there's amends for much bereft
In better thanks for much that's left.

For Jane, dear Mother, what at first
You'll see in her is all the worſt.
I'll say, at once, in outward make,

She is not fair enough to wake
The wish for fair. She bears the bell,
However, where no others dwell ;
And features somewhat plainly set,
And homely manners, leave her yet
The crowning boon and most express
Of Heaven's inventive tenderness,
A woman. But I do her wrong,
Letting the world's eyes guide my tongue !
For, since 't was for my peace, I've grown
More learned in my taste, and own
A sort of handsomeness that pays
No homage to the hourly gaze,
And dwells not on the arch'd brow's
height
And lids which softly lodge the light,
Nor in the pure field of the cheek
Flowers, though the soul be still to seek ;
But shows as fits that solemn place
Whereof the window is the face :

Blankness and leaden outlines mark
What time the Church within is dark ;
Yet view it on a Sunday night,
Or some occasion else for light,
And each ungainly line is seen
Some special character to mean
Of Saint or Prophet, and the whole
Blank window is a living scroll.

Her knowledge and conversing powers,
You'll find, are poor. The clock, for
hours,
Loud clicking on the mantel-shelf,
Has all the talking to itself.
But to and fro her needle runs
Twice, while the clock is ticking once ;
And, when a wife is well in reach,
Not silence separates, but speech ;
And I, contented, read, or smoke
And idly think, or idly stroke
The winking cat, or watch the fire,

In social peace that does not tire ;
Until, at easeful end of day,
She moves, and puts her work away,
And, saying “ How cold ’t is,” or “ How
warm,”
Or something else as little harm,
Comes, used to finding, kindly press’d,
A woman’s welcome to my breast,
With all the great advantage clear
Of none else having been so near.

But sometimes, (how shall I deny !)
There falls, with her thus fitting by,
Dejection, and a chilling shade.
Remember’d pleasures, as they fade,
Salute me, and, in fading, grow,
Like footprints in the thawing snow.
I feel oppress’d beyond my force
With foolish envy and remorse.
I love this woman, but I might
Have loved some else with more delight ;

And strange it seems of God that He
Should make a vain capacity.

Such times of ignorant relapse,
'T is well she does not talk, perhaps.
The dream, the discontent, the doubt,
To some injustice flaming out,
Were't else, might leave us both to moan
A kind tradition overthrown,
And dawning promise once more dead
In the pernicious lowlihead
Of not aspiring to be fair.
And what am I that I should dare
Dispute with God, who moulds one clay
To honour and shame, and wills to pay
With equal wages them that delve
About his vines one hour or twelve !

III.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother-in-Law, dear Fred
(you've heard
I've married him) sends love, and word
He hopes you'll come and see us soon.
Dear Fred will be on leave all June,
And, for a week, or even more,
We shall be very glad I'm sure.
Dear Fred said *I* must write. He thought
It seem'd so disrespectful not.
I'm sure that's the *last* thing I'd be
To dear Fred's relatives. Both he
And I are well, dear Mrs. Graham,
And trust sincerely you're the same.

The house is rather small we've got,
But dear Fred says that yours is not
So large by half; so you'll not mind.

If you can't leave your Maid behind,
Who, Fred says, always goes with you,
I'll manage somehow for her too.

You've heard of Uncle John, no doubt.
My choice, when first he found it out,
Displeased him, till he saw dear Fred,
Who, you'll be glad, he thinks well-bred,
And an extremely nice young man.

When I told Uncle John our plan
About you, of his own accord
He said, "Well, Jane, you can't afford
To hire a vehicle, my Dear;
So, while your Mother-in-Law is here,
I'll send my carriage every day.
The turnpikes won't be much to pay."
That's the kind sort of man, you know!
I feel quite sure you'll like him so.

He's well aware your family,
Though you're not rich, is very high,
And therefore he will not neglect,
Though rich himself, all due respect.

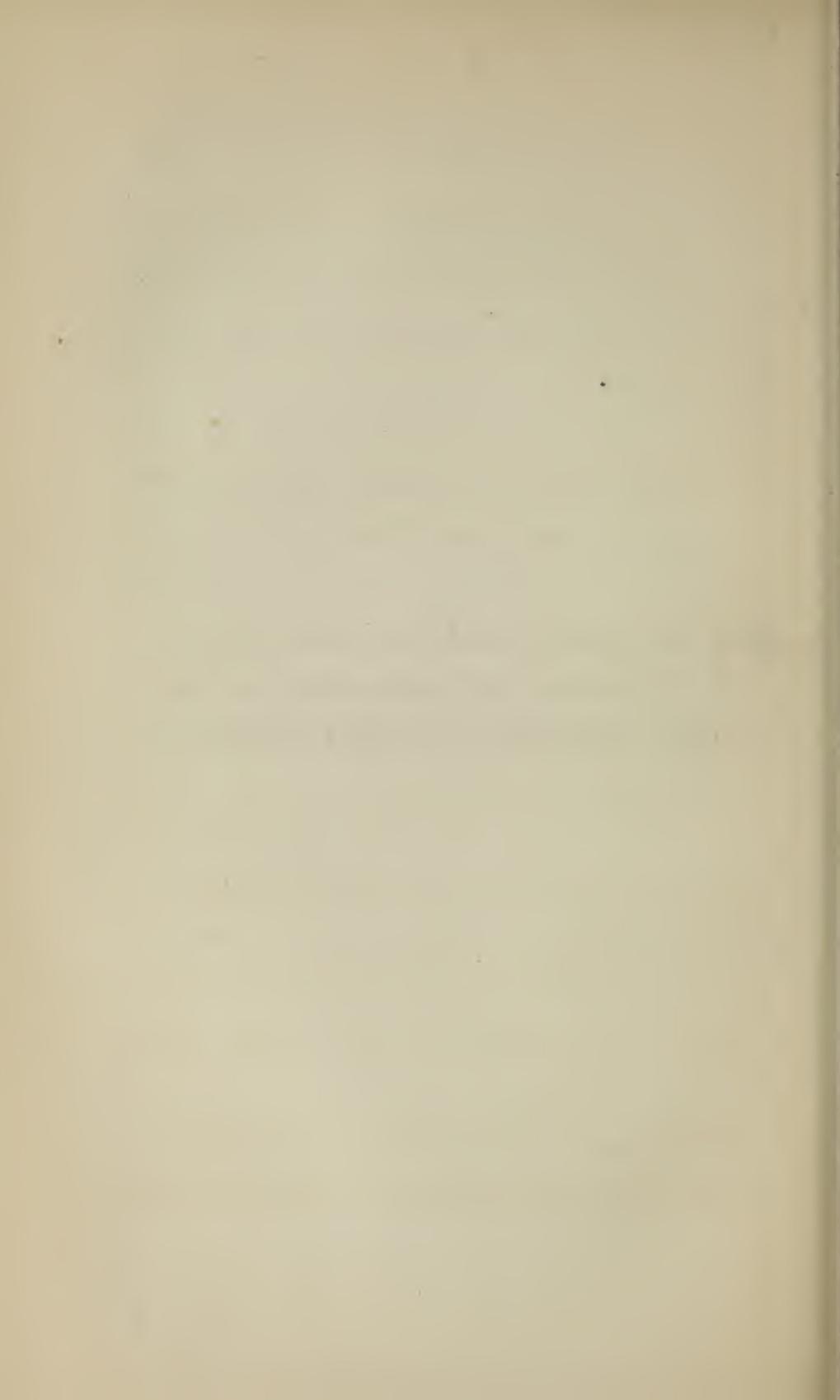
I've heard of your dear daughter Grace,
Who died. I hope to fill her place.
You must not think, now Fred has got
A closer tie, that you will not
Be loved just like you used to be.
For my part, I am glad to see
Affection. When I have but said
Your name, I've known him turn quite
red.

If I bewail our nature's taint,
He says he has seen a faultless Saint.
Of course that's you. I think there's none
More kind and just than your dear Son,
Yet, *between us*, Fred's worldly frame
Must grieve you much, dear Mrs. Graham;
Who are, I'm sure, from all I've heard,

A vessel chosen of the Lord.
But I have hopes of him ; for, oh,
How can we ever surely know
But that the very darkest place
May be the scene of saving grace,
Which softens even hearts of stone !
Commending you now to the Throne
Of Mercy, I remain in all,
Dear Mrs. Graham, excuse this scrawl,
In greatest haste, but still the same,
Your most affectionate JANE GRAHAM.

IV.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.



LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

I'VE dreadful news, my Sister dear !
 Frederick has married, as we hear,
Some awful girl. This fact we get
From Mr. Barton, whom we met
At Abury once. He used to know,
At Race and Hunt, Lord Clitheroe,
Who did not keep him up, of course,
And yet he writes, (could taste be worse!)
And tells John he had “seen Fred
 Graham,
Commander of the Wolf,—the same
The Mess call'd Joseph,—with his Wife

Under his arm." He lays his life,
"The fellow married her for love,
For there was nothing else to move.
H. is her Shibboleth. 'T is said
Her Mother was a Kitchen-Maid."

Poor Fred! What *will* Honoria say?
She thought so highly of him. Pray
Tell it her gently, for I'm sure
That, in her heart, she liked him more
Than all her Cousins. I've no right,
I know you hold, to trust my fight;
But Frederick's state could not be hid!
And Felix, coming when he did,
Was lucky; for Honoria, too,
Was almost gone. How warm she grew
On "worldliness," when once I said
I fancied that in love poor Fred
Had tastes much better than his means!
His hand was worthy of a Queen's,
Said she, and actually shed tears

The night he left us for two years,
And sobb'd, when ask'd the cause to tell,
That "Frederick look'd so miserable."
He *did* look very dull, no doubt,
But such things girls don't cry about.

What weathercocks men always prove !
You're quite right not to fall in love.
I never did, and, truth to tell,
I don't think it respectable.
The man can't understand it, too !
He likes to be in love with you,
But scarce knows how, if you love him,
Poor fellow ! When it's woman's whim
To serve her husband night and day,
The kind soul lets her have her way.
So, if you wed, as soon you should,
Be selfish for your husband's good !
Happy the men who relegate
Their pleasures, vanities, and state
To *us*. Their nature seems to be

To enjoy themselves by deputy,
For, seeking their own benefit,
Dear, what a mess they make of it !
A man will work his bones away,
If but his wife will only play ;
He does not mind how much he's teased,
So that his plague looks always pleased
And never thanks her, while he lives,
For anything, but what he gives !
It's hard to manage men, we hear !
Believe me, nothing's easier, Dear.
The most important step by far
Is finding what their colours are.
The next is, not to let them know
The reason why they love us so.
The indolent droop of a blue shawl,
Or gray silk's fluctuating fall,
Covers the multitude of sins
In me ; *your* husband, Love, might wince
At azure, and be wild at slate,

And yet do well with chocolate.
Of course you'd let him fancy he
Adored you for your piety !

There, now I've said enough, my Dear
To make you hate me for a year.
You need not write to tell me so.
Yours fondly, MILDRED CLITHEROE.

V.

JANE TO HER MOTHER.

JANE TO HER MOTHER.

DEAR Mother, Frederick's all, and
more,

A great deal, than you say, I'm sure ;
And, as you write, of course I see
How glad and thankful I should be
For such a husband. Yet, to tell
The truth, I am so miserable !
There surely must be some mistake.
What *could* he see in me to take
His fancy ! I remember, though,
He never said he loved me. No,
I'm no more fit for Frederick's wife
Than Queen of England. If my life

Could serve his very slightest whim,
I'm sure I'd give it up for him
With pleasure ; but what *shall* I do !
I find that he's so great and true
That everything seems false and wrong
I've done and thought my whole life long ;
And so, though he is often kind,
And never really crofs, my mind
Is all so dull and dead with fear
That Yes and No, when he is near,
Is much as I can fay. He's quite
Unlike what most would call polite,
And yet, when first I saw him come
To tea in Aunt's fine drawing-room,
He made me feel so common. Oh,
How dreadful if he thinks me so !
It's no use trying to behave
To him. His eye, so kind and grave,
Sees through and through me ! Could
not you,

Without his knowing that I knew,
Ask him to scold me now and then ?
Mother, it's such a weary strain
The way he has of treating me,
As if 't was something fine to be
A woman ; and appearing not
To notice any faults I've got,
But leaving me to mend, or bear
The guilt unblamed. I'm quite aware,
Of course, he knows I'm plain, and small,
Stupid, and ignorant, and all
Awkward and mean. As Frederick these,
I see the beauty which he sees
When often he looks strange awhile,
And recollects me with a smile.
I wish he had that fancied Wife,
With me for Maid, now ! all my life
To dres her out for him, and make
Her beauty lovelier for his sake.
To have her rate me till I cried ;

Then see her seated by his side,
And driven off proudly to the Ball ;
Then to stay up for her, whilst all
The servants were asleep ; and hear
At dawn the carriage rolling near,
And let them in ; and hear her laugh,
And boast he said that none was half
So beautiful, and that the Queen,
Who danced with him the first, had seen
And noticed her, and ask'd who was
That lady in the golden gauze !
And then to go to bed, and lie
In a sort of heavenly jealousy,
Until 't was broad day, and I guess'd
She slept, nor knew how she was bleff'd.

Mother, I look and feel so ill ;
And soon I shall be uglier still,
You know. But I have heard that men
Never think women ugly then.
Pray write and tell me if that's true.

And pardon me for teasing you
About my silly feelings so.

Please, Mother, never let him know
A word of what I write. I'd not
Complain, but for the fear I've got
Of going wild, as I've heard tell
Of some one shut up in a cell,
With no one else to talk to. He,
Finding that he was loved by me
The most, might think himself to blame;
And I should almost die for shame.

When I get up,—that's now at seven,
And 't is not light,—my heart's like
heaven

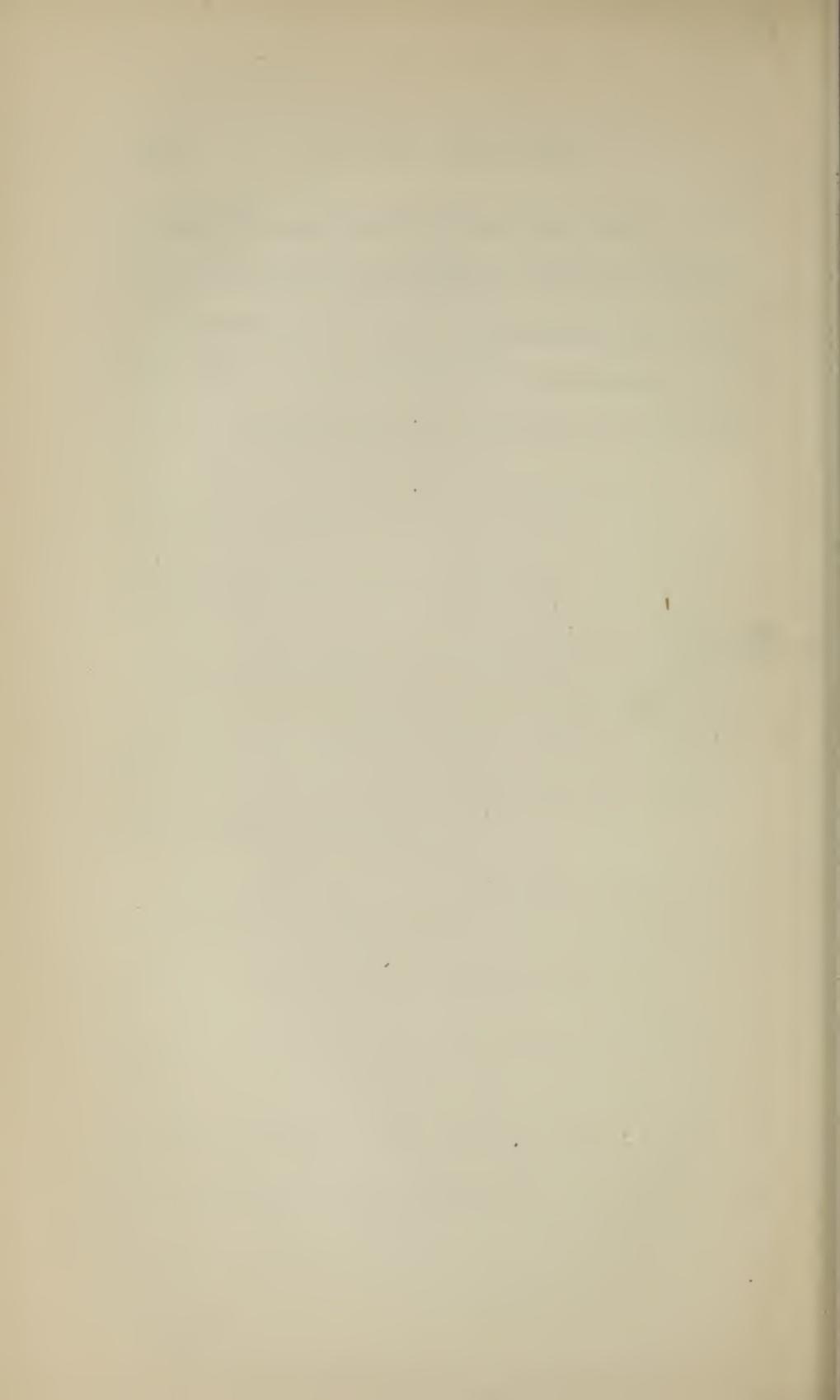
At times; for I've a foolish whim
That Fred loves me as I love him,
And, though I'm neither fair nor wise,
Love, somehow, makes a woman nice.
But daylight makes the glass reflect
The fact; and then I recollect

That often in the night things seem
Which are not, though we do not dream.

If being good would serve — but oh !
The thought's ridiculous, you know.
Why, I myself, I never could
See what's in women's being good.
They've nothing in the world to do
But as it's just their nature to.
Now, when the men, you know, do right,
They have to try with all their might.
They're so much nobler ! As for us,
We don't deserve the least the fuss
They make about us.

Mother, mind
You must not think that he's unkind.
Why, I would rather Frederick
Should hate me, beat me with a stick,
Than stop at home all day and coo,
As Aunt likes Uncle John to do.
I'm never prouder, after all,

Than when he stands, so stern and tall,
Before the fire. With busy lives,
Men can't love like their idle wives !
And, oh, how dull, whilst they were out,
Had women naught to cry about !



V I.

DR. CHURCHILL TO FREDERICK.

DR. CHURCHILL TO FREDERICK.

DEAR Nephew, we have heard your news

From strangers ! Be assured we use
Not lightly to relax our love
Where once 't is bound ; and I approve
Your reasons, whatsoe'er they be,
For silence. Yield no less to me
For saying I wish, with all my heart,
Your happiness, and on the part
Of Mary, who is still at home,
Whenever you may choose to come
And bring your Wife, you both will find
A welcome coufinly and kind.

As an old man, a relative,
And churchman, I make free to give
My blessing, burthen'd with the truth
For want of which the fragile youth
Of wedlock suffers shocks and fears,
That swell the heart with needless tears.
I'll not suppose that rarest chance
Has fall'n which makes a month's romance.

Few, if 't were known, wed whom they
would;

And this, like all God's laws, is good.
For naught's so sad the whole world o'er
As much love which has once been more.

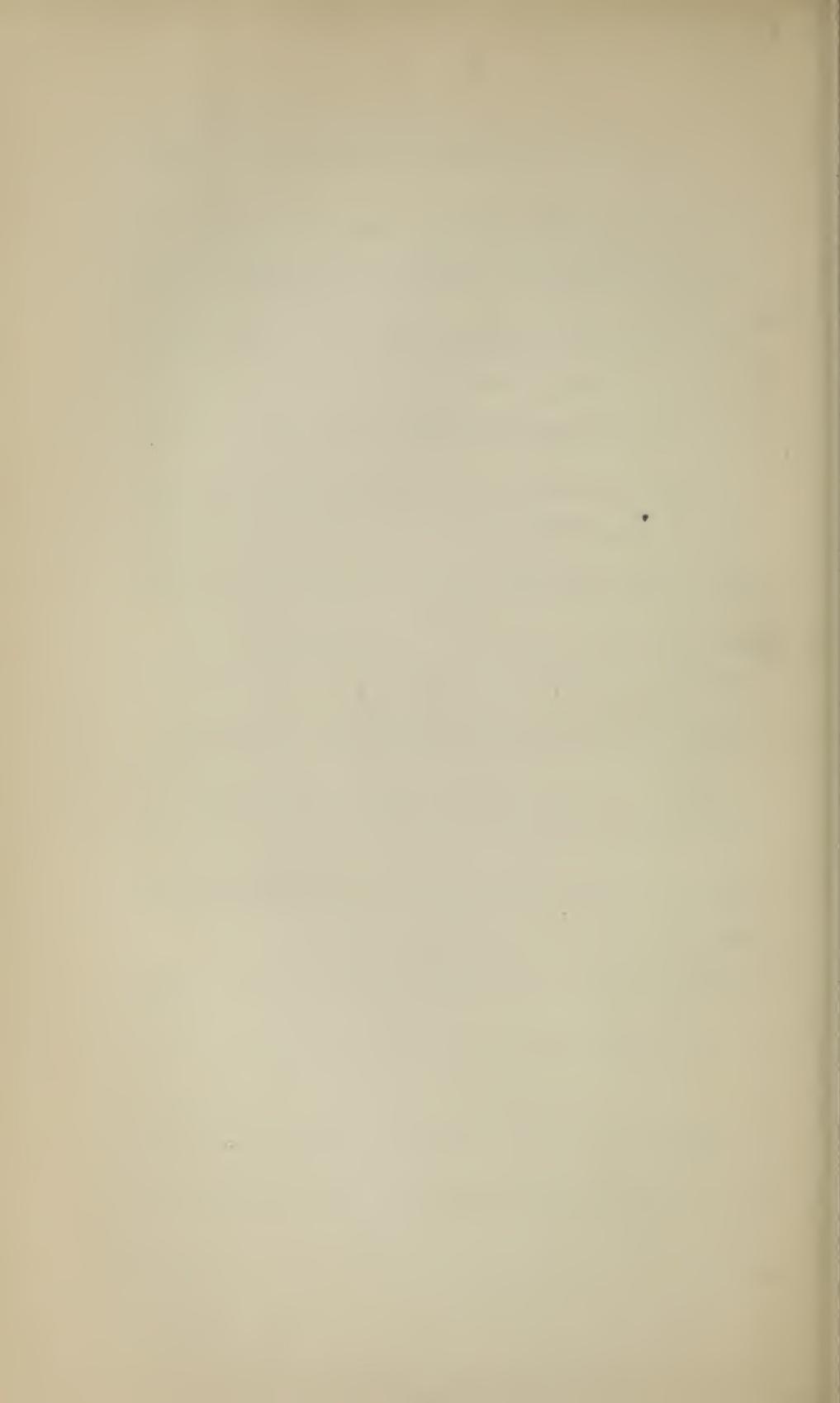
Glorious for warmth and light is love;
But worldly things in the rays thereof
Extend their shadows, every one
False as the image which the sun
At noon or eve dwarfs or protracts.
A perilous lamp to light men's acts!

By Heaven's kind, impartial plan,
Well wived is he that's truly man,
If but the woman's womanly,
As sure I am your choice must be.
Lust of the eyes and pride of life
Perhaps she's not. The better wife !
If it be thus, if you have known
(As who has not ?) some heavenly one
Whom the dull background of despair
Help'd to show forth supremely fair ;
If Memory, still remorseful, shapes
Young Passion bringing Eschol grapes
To travellers in the Wilderness,
This truth will make regret the less :
Mighty in love as graces are,
God's ordinance is mightier far ;
And he who is but just and kind
And patient, shall for guerdon find,
Before long, that the body's bond
Is all else utterly beyond

In power of love to actualize
The soul's bond which it signifies,
And even to deck a wife with grace
External in the form and face.
A five years' wife and not yet fair ?
Blame let the man, not Nature, bear !
For as the sun, warming a bank
Where last year's grafts droops gray and
dank,
Evokes the violet, bids disclose
In yellow crowds the fresh primrose,
And foxglove hang her flushing head,
So vernal love, where all seems dead,
Makes beauty abound.

Nor was that naught,
That trance of joy beyond all thought,
The vision, in one, of womanhood ;
But for all women holding good !
Should marriage such a prologue want,
'T were Fordid and most ignorant

Profanity ; but, having this,
'T is honour now, and future bliss.
Life, as a child, is put to play
Love's simple gamut day by day.
If on this humble task he dwells,
Not flying off to something else,
But as the Master bids, devotes
To these few oft-repeated notes,
His practice, till such comes to be
His subtle, smooth celerity
That from his easy hand they are flung
Like bead-rows by a touch unstrung,
The Master, after many days,
Beyond hope speaks, "Now go thy ways ;
And, in thy safe and finish'd art,
Take, with the chime of heaven, thy
part.



VII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

MOTHER, on my returning home
Last night, I went to my wife's
room,

Who, whispering me that our alarms
Were over, put into my arms
Your Grandson. And I give you joy
Of what, I'm told, is a fine boy.

Their notion that he's just like me
Is neither fact nor flattery !

To you I'll own the little wight
Fill'd me, unfatherly, with fright,
So grim it gazed, and out of the sky
There came, minute, remote, the cry,

Piercing, of original pain.
I put the wonder back to Jane,
Who proffer'd, as in kindly course,
Untried amends for strange divorce.
It gueff'd at once, by great good luck,
The clever baby, how to fuck !
Yet Jane's delight seem'd dash'd, that I,
Of strangers still by nature shy,
Was not familiar quite so soon
With her small friend of many a moon.

But when the new-made Mother smiled,
She seem'd herself a little child,
Dwelling at large beyond the law
By which, till then, I judged and saw,
And that fond glow which she felt stir
For it, suffused my heart for her ;
To whom, from the weak babe, and thence
To me, an influent innocence,
Happy, reparative of life,
Came, and she was indeed my wife,

As there lovely with love she lay,
Brightly contented all the day
To hug her sleepy little boy
In the reciprocated joy
Of touch, the childish sense of love,
Ever inquisitive to prove
Its strange possession, and to know
If the eyes' report be really so.

She wants his name to be like mine,
But I demur, at twenty-nine,
To being call'd "Old Frederick."
Her father's, Richard, would be "Dick;"
So John has now been fix'd upon,
After her childless Uncle John,
Who owns the Grimsley Powder-Mill,
And, perhaps, may put him in his Will.
'T is also settled, since the mind,
As Jane has heard, may be refined,
In babyhood, by fights that lull
The senses with the Beautiful,

That John must be refined at once.
No fault of ours if he's a dunce !
She covets, in the shower-bath's place,
A marble image of a Grace,
Or, if that costs too much, a cast ;
But we are both agreed, at laſt,
'T will do to pin a certain shawl,
Too gay to wear, against the wall,
And let him learn to kick and coo
At lovely ſtripes of red and blue.
And, ſince Nurse fays that, now-a-days,
Boys learn, at ſchool, ſuch wicked ways,
Our John's to be brought up at home.
Nor muſt he take to ſea, but ſome
Leſs perilous and reſtless life,
Which will not part him from his wife ;
The Law miſt give his talents play !
It's clear he's clever from the way
He looks about, and frowned, and winks,
Which shows that he obſerves and thinks.

VIII.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother,— such, if you'll allow,

In *love*, not *law*, I'll call you now,—
I hope you're well. I write to say
Frederick has got, besides his pay,
A good appointment in the Docks ;
Also to thank you for the frocks
And shoes for baby. I, D. v.,
Shall wean him soon. Fred goes to sea
No more. I *am* so glad ; because,
Though kinder husband never was,
He seems still kinder to become
The more he stays with me at home.

When we've been parted, I see plain
He's dull till he gets us'd again
To marriage. Do not tell him, though;
I would not have him know I know,
For all the world.

How good of you
Not, as I've heard some mothers do,
To hate his wife! I try to mind
All your advice; but sometimes find
I do not well know how. I thought
To take it about dres's; so bought
A gay new bonnet, gown, and shawl;
But Frederick was not pleased at all;
For, though he smiled, and said, " How
smart!"

I feel, you know, what's in his heart.
But I shall learn! I fancied long
That care in dres's was very wrong,
Till Frederick, in his startling way
When I began to blame, one day,

The Admiral's wife, because we hear
She spends two hours, or something near,
In dressing, took her part, and said
How all things deck themselves that wed ;
How birds and plants grow fine to please
Each other in their marriages ;
And how (which certainly is true —
It never struck me — did it you ?)
Dress was, at first, Heaven's ordinance,
And has much Scripture countenance.
For Eliezer, we are told,
Adorn'd with jewels and with gold
Rebecca. In the Psalms, again,
How the King's Daughter dress'd ! And,
then,

The Good Wife in the Proverbs, she
Made herself clothes of tapestry,
Purple, and silk : and there's much more
I had not thought about before !
It's strange how well Fred understands

A Book I don't see in his hands
At all, except at Church.

Do you know,
Since Baby came, he loves me so !
I'm really useful, now, to Fred ;
And none could do so well instead.
It's nice to fancy, if I died,
He'd miss me from the Darling's side !
Also, there's something now, you see,
On which we talk, and quite agree ;
On which, without pride too, I can
Hope I am wiser than a man.
I should be happy now, if quite
Convinced that Frederick was right
About religion ; but he's odd,
And very seldom speaks of God ;
And, though I trust his prayers are said,
Because he goes so late to bed,
I doubt his calling. Glad to find
A text adapted to his mind,

I show'd him Thirty-three and four
Of Chapter seven, first of Cor.,
Which seems to allow, in Man and Wife,
A little worldliness of life.

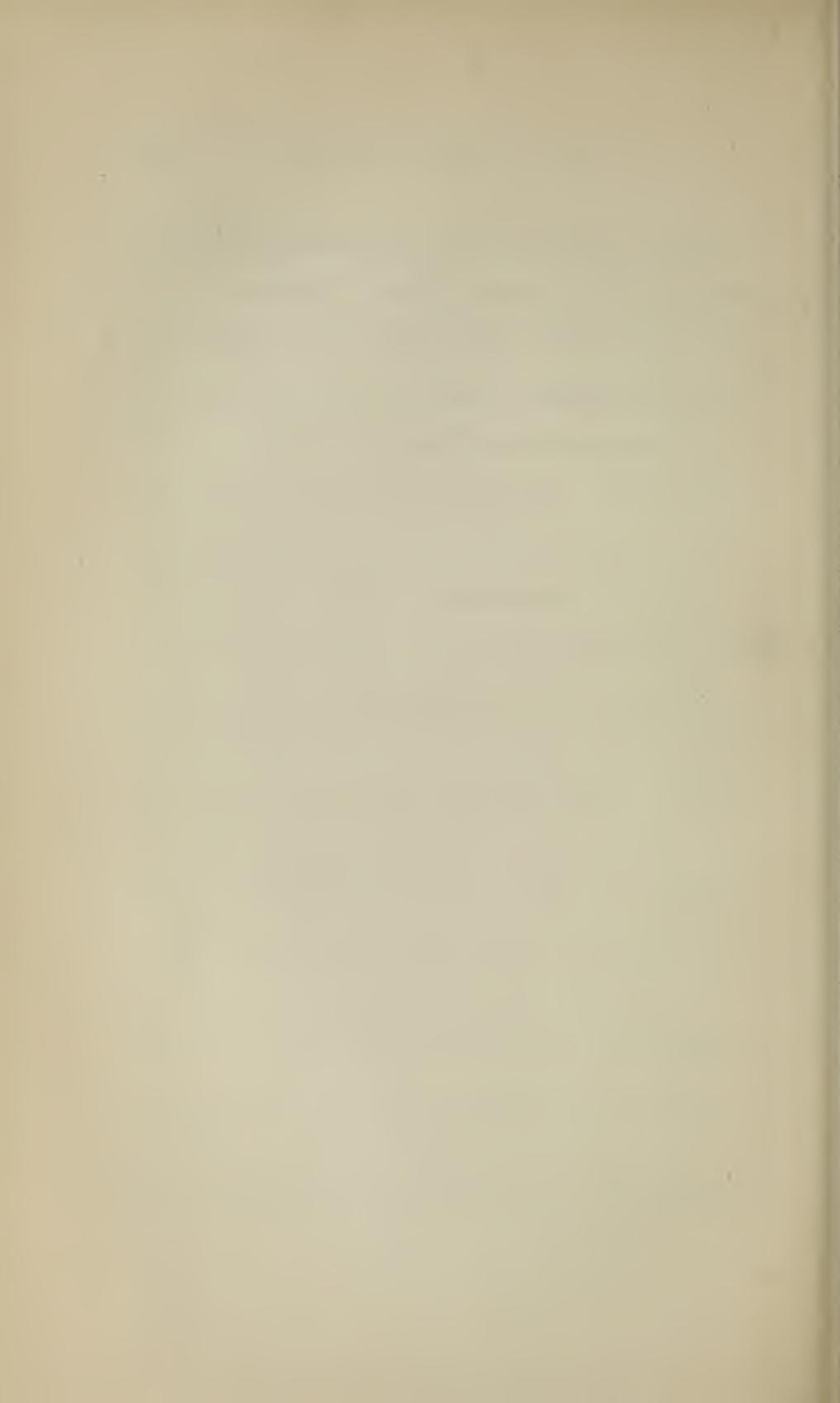
He smiled, and said that he knew all
Such things as that without Saint Paul !
And once he said, when I with pain
Had got him just to read Romaine,
“ Men’s creeds should not their hopes
condemn.

Who wait for heaven to come to them
Are little like to go to heaven,
If logic’s not the devil’s leaven ! ”
I cried at such a wicked joke,
And he, surprised, went out to smoke.

But to judge him is not for me,
Who sin myself so dreadfully
As half to doubt if I should care
To go to heaven, and he not there.
He *must* be right ; and I dare say

I soon shall understand his way.
To other things, once strange, I've grown
Accustom'd, nay, to like. I own
'T was long before I grew well us'd
To sit, while Frederick read or mused
For hours, and scarcely spoke. When he,
For all that, held the door to me,
Picked up my handkerchief, and rose
To set my chair, with other shows
Of honour, such as men, 't is true,
To sweethearts and fine ladies do,
It almost seem'd an unkind jest ;
But now I like these ways the best.
They somehow help to make me good ;
And I don't mind his quiet mood.
If Frederick *does* seem dull awhile,
There's Baby. You should see him smile!
I'm pretty and nice to him, sweet Pet,
And he will learn no better yet ;
And when he's big and wife, you know,

There'll be new babes to think me so,
Indeed, now little Johnny makes
A busier time of it, and takes
Our thoughts off one another more,
I'm happy as need be, I'm sure !



B O O K III.

R A C H E L.

I.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mrs. Graham, the fever's past,
And we're all well. I, in my last,
Forgot to say that, while 't was on,
A lady, call'd Honoria Vaughan,
One of Fred's Salisbury Cousins, came.
Had I, she ask'd me, heard her name?
'T was that Honoria, no doubt,
Whom Fred would sometimes talk about
And speak to, when his nights were bad,
And so I told her that I had.
She look'd so beautiful and kind!
And so much like the wife my mind
Was fond of picturing for Fred,

Those wretched years we first were wed,
Before I guess'd, or use could prove,
The sort of things my husband loved ;
And how just living with me was,
In some strange way, the dearest cause
For liking, and, instead of charms,
Was being accustom'd to my arms ;
And even how my getting ill,
And nervous, cross, and uglier still,
And bringing him all kinds of care,
Affected him like growing fair ;
And how, by his brave fingers press'd,
The blister, that would burn my breast
And only make his own to smart,
Drew the proud flesh from either's heart ;
And so, for all indignities
Of life in health and in disease,
His friendliness got more and more !
 Of this great joy to make quite sure,
I ask'd once, (when he could not see,)

Why such things made him fond of me?
He kiss'd me and said, the honour due
To the weaker vessel surely grew
With the vessel's weakness !

I'll go on,

However, about Mrs. Vaughan.
Visiting, yesterday, she said,
The Admiral's Wife, she learn'd that
Fred

Was very ill ; she begg'd to be,
If possible, of use to me.

What could she do ? Last year, Fred's
Aunt

Died, leaving her, who had not a want,
Her fortune. Half was his, she thought ;
But Fred, she knew, would ne'er be
brought

To take his rights at second-hand !
Yet something might, she hoped, be
plann'd

With me, which even Frederick,
As favour done to *her*, would like.
What did I think of putting John
To school and college? Mr. Vaughan,
When John was old enough, could give
Preferment to her relative,
In Government or Church. I said
I felt quite sure that dearest Fred
Would be so thankful. Would we come,
And make ourselves, then, quite at home,
Next month, at High-Hurst? Change
of air

Both he and I should need, and there
At leisure we could talk, and fix
Our plans, as John was nearly six.

It seemed so rude to think and doubt,
So I said, Yes. In going out,
She said, "How odd of Frederick, Dear,"
(I wish'd he had been there to hear,)
"To send no cards, or tell me what

A nice new Coufin I had got !

Was'nt that kind ?

When Fred grew strong,
I had, I found, done very wrong.
For the first time, his voice and eye
Were angry. But, with folks so high
As Fred and Mrs. Vaughan and you,
It's hard to guesf what's right to do !
And he won't teach me.

Dear Fred wrote,
Directly, such a lovely note,
Which, though it undid all I'd done,
Was, both to me and Mrs. Vaughan,
So kind ! His words, I can't say why,
Like soldiers' music, made me cry.

Do, Mother, ask dear Fred to go
Without me ! I can't leave, you know,
The babes. Besides, 't were folly stark
For *me* to go to High-Hurst Park.
I'm not so awkward as I was ;

But, all confused, and just because
By chance he call'd me "Love" to-day,
I made such haste out of his way
I overset my chair ; whereat
Fred laugh'd, and on the spitting cat
The fire-screen tumbled ; so I tried
These risks no more, and stood and cried,
And hid for shame my burning face,
To hear he liked "that kind of grace."
Fancy if such a thing was done
Where ladies move like Mrs. Vaughan !
But dearest Fred *should*, once a year,
Just get a sight of his own sphere.

II.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY
CHURCHILL.

DEAR Saint, I'm still at High-Hurst
Park.

The house is fill'd with folks of mark.
Honoria suits a good estate
Much better than I hoped. How fate
Pets her with happiness and pride !
And such a loving lord, beside !
But, between us, Sweet, everything
Has limits, and to build a wing
To this old house, when Courtholm stands
Empty upon his Berkshire lands,
And all that Honor might be near

Papa, was buying love *too* dear.
And yet, to see mild Mrs. Vaughan
Shining on all she looks upon,
You'd think that none could stand more
high
Than others in her charity ;
And to behold her courtly lord
Converse with her across the board,
'T would seem that part of perfect life
Was not to covet one's own wife.
The hypocrites !

Love, there are two
Guests here, whose names will startle
you,
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Graham !
I thought he stay'd away for shame.
He and his wife were ask'd, you know,
And would not come, four years ago.
You recollect Miss Smythe found out
Who she had been, and all about

The Chaplain and the Powder-Mill,
And how the fine Aunt tried to instil
Haut ton, and how, at last, poor Jane
Had got so shy and *gauche* that, when
The Dockyard gentry came to sup,
She always had to be lock'd up ;
And some one wrote to John and said
Her mother was a Kitchen-Maid.
Dear Mary, you 'll be charm'd to know
It *must* be all a fib. But, oh,
She *is* the oddest little Pet
On which my eyes were ever set !
She 's so *outréée* and natural
That, when she first arrived, we all
Wonder'd, as when a robin comes
In through the window to eat crumbs
At breakfast with us. She has sense,
Humility, and confidence ;
And, save in dressing just a thought
Gayer in colours than she ought,

(To-day she looks a cross between
Gypsy and Fairy, red and green,) All that she does is somehow well.
And yet one never quite can tell What she *might* do or utter next.
Lord Clitheroe is much perplex'd ; Her husband, every now and then, Looks nervous ; all the other men Are charm'd. Yet she has neither grace, Nor one good feature in her face.
Her eyes, indeed, flame in her head, Like very altar-fires to Fred, Whose step she follows everywhere, Like a tame duck, to the despair Of Colonel Holmes, who does his part To break her funny little heart.
Honor's enchanted. 'T is her view That people, if they're good and true, And treated well, and let alone, Will kindly take to what's their own,

And always be original,
Like children. (Honor's just like all
The rest of us ! But, thinking so,
It's well she miss'd Lord Clitheroe,
Who hates originality,
Though he puts up with it in me !)

Poor Mrs. Graham has never been
To the Opera ! You should have seen
The innocent way she told the Earl
She thought Plays sinful when a girl,
And now she never had a chance !
Frederick's complacent smile and glance
Towards her, show'd me, past a doubt,
Honoria had been quite cut out.
It's very odd ; for Mrs. Graham,
Though Frederick's fancy none can
blame,
Seems the *last* woman you'd have thought
Her lover would have ever sought !
She never reads, I find, nor goes

Anywhere ; so that I suppose
She came at all she ever knew
By lapping milk, as kittens do.

Talking of kittens, by the by,
You've much more influence than I
With dear Honoria. Get her, Dear,
To be a little more severe
With those sweet children. They've the
run

Of all the house. When school was done,
Maude burst in, while the Earl was there,
With "O Mamma, do be a bear!"
They come on with the fruit, and climb
In people's laps, and all the time
Eat, and we ladies have to rise,
Left Frank should die of strawberries.

And there's another thing, my Love,
I wish you'd show you don't approve,
(But perhaps you do !) Though all confess
Her tact is absolute in drefs,

She does not get her things so *good*
As, with her fortune now, she should.
I feel quite certain, between us,
She cheats her husband, (she did thus
With dear Papa,) and has no end
Of pin-money, full half to spend
On folks who think themselves in this
Paid takers of her tolls to Blifs.

She has her faults, but I must say
She's handsomer, in her quiet way,
Than ever ! This odd wife of Fred
Adores his old love in his stead.

III.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

MOTHER, at last, we are really
come
To High-Hurst. Johnny stays at home.
We settled that it must be so,
For he has been to Aunt's, at Stowe,
And learn'd to leave his h's out ;
And people like the Vaughans, no doubt,
Would think this dreadful. I, at first,
Half fear'd this visit to the Hurst.
Fred must, I knew, be so distress'd
By aught in me unlike the rest
Who come here. But I find the place
Delightful ; there's such ease and grace

And kindness, and all seem to be
On such a high equality.

They have not got to think, you know,
How far to make the money go.

But Frederick says it's less the expence
Of money, than of found good sense,
Quickness to care what others feel,
And thoughts with nothing to conceal ;
Which I'll teach Johnny. Mrs. Vaughan
Was waiting for us on the Lawn,
And kiss'd and call'd me " Cousin." Fred
Neglected his old friends, she said.
He laugh'd, and redden'd up at this.
She was, I think, a flame of his ;
But I'm not jealous ! Luncheon done,
I left him, who had just begun
To talk about the chance of war,
With an old Lady, Lady Carr,—
A Countess, but I'm more afraid,
A great deal, of the Lady's maid,—

And went with Mrs. Vaughan to see
The pictures, which appear'd to be
Of sorts of horses, boors, and cows
Call'd Wouvermans, and Cuyps, and Dows.
And, then, she took me up, to show
Her bedroom, where, long years ago,
A Queen slept. 'T is all tapestries
Of Cupids, Gods, and Goddesses ;
And black, carved oak. A curtain'd door
Leads, thence, into her bright boudoir,
Where even her husband may but come
By favour. He, too, has his room,
Kept sacred to his solitude.
Did I not think the plan was good ?
She ask'd me ; but I said how small
Our house was, and that, after all,
Though Fred would never say his prayers
At night, till I was safe upstairs,
I thought it wrong to be so shy
Of being good when I was by.

“Oh, you should humour him!” she said,
With her sweet voice and smile; and led
The way to where the children ate
Their dinner, and Miss Williams fate.
She’s only Nursery-Governess,
Yet they consider her no less
Than Lord or Lady Carr, or me.
Just think how happy she must be!
The Ball-Room, with its painted sky,
Where heavy angels seem to fly,
Is a dull place; its size and gloom
Make them prefer, for drawing-room,
The Library, all done up new
And comfortable, with a view
Of Salisbury Spire between the boughs.

When she had shown me through the
house,
(I wish I could have let her know
That she herself was half the show,
She *is* so handsome and so kind,)

She had the children down, who had
dined,

And, taking one in either hand,
Show'd me how all the grounds were
plann'd.

The lovely garden gently slopes
To where a curious bridge of ropes
Crosses the Avon to the Park.

We rested by the stream, to mark
The brown backs of the hovering trout.
Frank tickled one, and took it out
From under a stone. We saw his owls,
And awkward Cochin China fowls,
And shaggy pony in the croft ;
And then he dragg'd us to a loft,
Where pigeons, as he push'd the door,
Fann'd clear a breadth of dusty floor,
And set us coughing. I confess
I trembled for my nice silk dress.
I cannot think how Mrs. Vaughan

Ventured with that which she had on,—
A mere white wrapper, with a few
Plain trimmings of a tranquil blue,
But, oh, so pretty ! Then the bell
For dinner rang. I look'd quite well,
("Quite charming" were the words Fred
said,)

In the new gown that I've had made
At Salisbury. In the drawing-room
Was Mr. Vaughan, just then come home.
I thought him rather cold, but find
That he's at heart extremely kind.
He's Captain of the Yeomanry,
And Magistrate, and has to see
About the paupers and the roads ;
And Fred says he has written odes
On Mrs. Vaughan, to send her praise,
Like Laura's, down to distant days.
So she deserves ! What cause there is,
I know not, though, for saying this,

But that she looks so kind and young,
And every word's a little song.

I am so proud of Frederick,
He's so high-bred and lordly-like
With Mrs. Vaughan ! He's not quite so
At home with me ; but that, you know,
I can't expect, or wish. 'T would hurt,
And seem to mock at my desert.
Not but that I'm a duteous wife
To Fred ; but in another life,
Where all are fair that have been true,
I hope I shall be graceful too,
Like Mrs. Vaughan. And, now, Good-
bye.
That happy thought has made me cry.

IV.

HONORIA VAUGHAN TO DR. CHURCHILL.

HONORIA VAUGHAN TO DR.
CHURCHILL.

DEAREST Papa, at last we are come,
The tiresome season over, home !

How honourable it seems to me !

I am sick of town society,
The Opera, and the flatteries
Of cynic, disrespectful eyes !

Frederick is here. Tell Mrs. Fife ;
Who adored him. He has brought his
wife.

She *is* so nice ; but Felix goes
Next Sunday with her to the Close,
And you will judge her. She the first

Has made me jealous, though the Hurst
Is lit so oft with loveliness,
And, when in town, where I was less
Constrain'd in choice, I always ask'd
The prettiest. Felix really bask'd
Like Puff in fire-shine, when the room
Was all aflame with female bloom ;
And, since I praised and did not pout,
His little, lawless loves went out
With the last brocade. 'T is not the
fame,

I find, with Mrs. Frederick Graham !
I must not have her stopping here
More than a fortnight once a year.
My husband says he never saw
Such proof of what he holds for law,
That beauty is love which can be seen.
Whatever he by this may mean,
Were it not fearful if he fell
In love with her on principle !

Felix has spoken only twice :
Once on Savoy, and once on this
Shameful Reform Bill ; and on each
He made a most successful speech ;
And both times I, of course, was there
And heard him cheer'd. But, (how un-
fair !)

Whenever, wishing to explain
His meaning, he got up again,
They call'd out "Order," and "Oh, oh!"
He abused the Newspapers, and so
The "Times" left out the cries of "Hear."
The very Opposition cheer
Dear Felix ; and at what he said
The Arch-Radical turn'd white and red.
I saw him with my opera-glaſs.
Yet they allow'd the law to paſſ
The ſecond reading. Should this cheat
Succeſſ next ſpring, we loſe our ſeat !
Nor ſhall I grieve. The wifest fay

There's near at hand an evil day ;
And, though, if Felix chose to stir,
I am sure he might be Minister,
I tell him, they serve England most
Who keep, at whatsoever cost,
Their honour ; and, when best and first
Have flung their strength to last and worst,
And ruling means, from hour to hour
Cajoling those who have the power,
A gentleman should stay at home,
And let his rulers sometimes come
And blush at his high privacy.
Felix, I know, agrees with me,
Although he calls me, “ Fierce white cat ! ”
And says, 't is not yet come to that.

Yesterday, he and I fell out ;
Can you believe it ? 'T was about
The cost at which he says I dress'd
Last season. *I* came off the best ;
And you, Papa, by both stand task'd

Instead, as you shall learn : I ask'd,
Would he, at one house, think it nice
To see me in the same dress twice ?
Of course he kiss'd me, and said, "No!"
And then I proved, *he* made me go
To Lady Lidderdale's three fetes
And both her dances ! *Magistrates*
Ought to know better than to try
A charge dismiff'd ; and he and I
Had talk'd this over once before !
Forgiv'n, he vow'd to offend no more.
But, oh, he actually says
You caution'd him against my ways :
We both are shock'd Papa could be
So cruel and unfatherly !

V.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

COULD any, whilst there's any woe,
Be wholly blest, the Vaughans
were so !

Each is, and is aware of it,
The other's endless benefit ;
But, though their daily ways reveal
The depth of private joy they feel,
'T is not their bearing each to each
That does abroad their secret preach,
But such a lovely good-intent
To all within their government
And friendship, as, 't is well discern'd,
Each of the other must have learn'd ;

For no mere faith of neighbourhood
Ever begot so fair a mood.

Honoraria, made more dove-like mild
With added loves of lord and child,
Is else unalter'd. Years, that wrong
The rest, touch not her beauty, young
With youth that seems her natal
clime,

And no way relative to time.

All in her presence generous grow,
As in the sunshine flowers blow ;
As colours, each superb to fight,
When all combined are only light,
Her many noble virtues miss
Proud virtue's blazon, and are bliss ;
The standards of the depth are furl'd ;
The powers and pleasures of the
world

Pay tribute ; and her days are all
So high, pure, sweet, and practical,

She almost seems to have, at home,
What's promised of the life to come.

And fair, in fact, should be the few
God dowers with nothing else to do ;
And liberal of their light, and free
To show themselves, that all may see !
For alms let poor men poorly give
The meat whereby men's bodies live ;
But they of wealth are stewards wise
Whose graces are their charities.

The funny charm about this home
Makes all to shine who thither come.
My own dear Jane has caught its grace,
And does an honour to the place.
Across the lawn I lately walk'd
Alone, and watch'd where moved and
talk'd,
Gentle and goddefs-like of air,
Honoria and some stranger fair.
I chose a path away from these ;

When one of the two Goddesses,
With my wife's voice, but softer, said,
“ Will you not walk with us, dear
Fred ? ”

She moves, indeed, the modest peer
Of all the proudest ladies here.
’T is wonderful she should not be
Put out by such fine company.
We daily dine with men who stand
Among the leaders of the land,
And women beautiful and wise,
With England’s greatness in their eyes.
To high, traditional good-sense,
And knowledge vast without pretence,
And human truth exactly hit
By quiet and conclusive wit,
Listens my little, homely dove,
Mistakes the points, and laughs for love.
You should have seen the vain delight,
After we went upstairs last night,

With which she stood and comb'd her
hair,

And call'd me much the wittiest there !

With reckless loyalty, dear Wife,
She lays herself about my life !
The joy I might have had of yore
I have not ; for 't is now no more,
With me, the lyric time of youth,
And glad sensatian of the truth ;
Yet, beyond hope or purpose blest,
In my rash choice, let be confess'd
The tenderer Providence that rules
The fates of children and of fools !

I kiss'd the kind, warm neck that slept,
And from her side this morning stepp'd,
To bathe my brain from drowsy night
In the sharp air and golden light.
The dew, like frost, was on the pane.
The year begins, though fair, to wane.
There is a fragrance in its breath

Which is not of the flowers, but death,
And green above the ground appear
The lilies of another year.

I wandered forth, and took my path
Among the bloomless aftermath ;
And heard the steadfast robin sing,
As if his own warm heart were spring,
And watch'd him feed where, on the yew,
Hung sugar'd drops of crimson dew ;
And then return'd, by walls of peach
And pear-trees bending to my reach,
And rose-buds with the roses gone,
To bright-laid breakfast. Mrs. Vaughan
Was there, none with her. I confess
I love her rather more than less !
But she alone was loved of old ;
Now love is twain, nay, manifold ;
For, somehow, he whose daily life
Adjusts itself to one true wife,
Grows to a nuptial, near degree

With all that's fair and womanly.
Therefore, as more than friends, we met
Without constraint, without regret ;
The wedded yoke that each had donn'd
Seeming a sanction, not a bond.

V I.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

A MAN'S taskmasters are enough !
Add not yourself to the host
thereof.

This did you ever from the first,
As now, in venturing to the Hurst.
You won, my child, from weak surprise,
A vigour to be doubly wise.
In wedlock : with success, then, cease,
Nor risk the triumph and the peace.
'T is not pure faith that hazards even
The adulterous hope of change in heaven.

Your love lacks joy, your letter says.
Yes ; love requires the focal space

Of recollection, or of hope,
Ere it can measure its own scope.
Too soon, too soon, comes Death to
show

We love more deeply than we know !
The rain, that fell upon the height
Too gently to be call'd delight,
Within the dark vale reappears,
As a wild cataract of tears ;
And love in life should try to see
Sometimes what love in death would be !
(Easier to love, we so should find,
It is, than to be just and kind !)

She's cold. Put to the coffin-lid.
What distance for another did,
That death has done for her ! The good,
Once gazed upon with heedless mood,
Now fills with tears the famish'd eye,
And turns all else to vanity.
'T is sad to see, with death between,

The good we have pass'd, and have not
seen !

How strong appear the words of all !
The looks of those that live appall.
They are the ghosts, and check the breath ;
There's no reality but death,
And hunger for some signal given
That we shall have our own in heaven !
But this the God of love lets be
A horrible uncertainty.

How great her smallest virtue seems,
How small her greatest fault ! Ill dreams
Were those that foil'd with loftier grace
The homely kindness of her face.
'T was here she sat and work'd, and there
She comb'd and kiss'd the children's hair ;
Or, with one baby at her breast,
Another taught, or hush'd to rest.
Praise does the heart no more refuse
To the divinity of use.

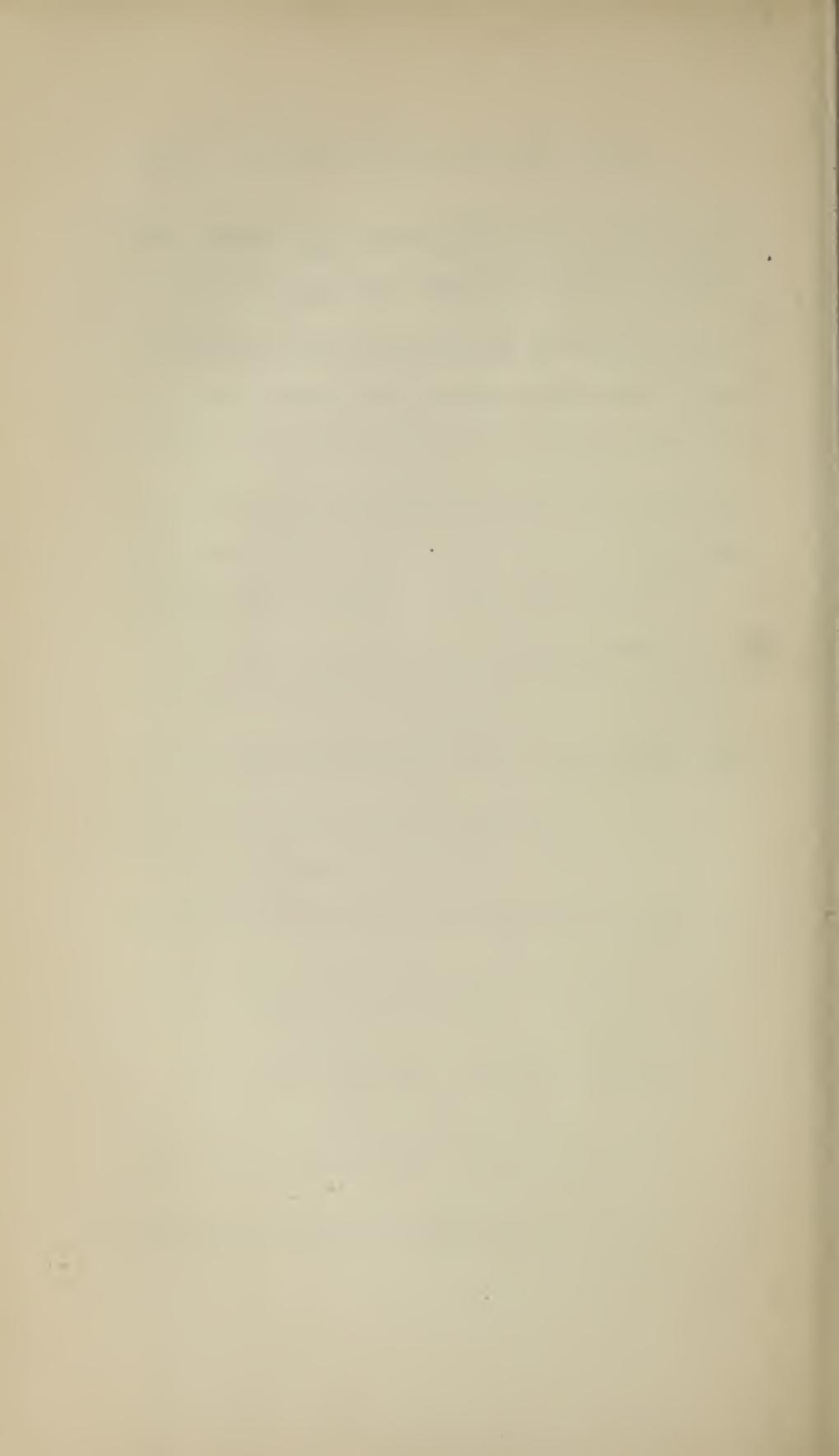
Her humblest good is hence most high
In the heavens of fond memory ;
And love says Amen to the word,
A prudent wife is from the Lord.

Her worst gown's kept, ('t is now the best,
And that in which she oftener dress'd,)
For memory's sake more precious grown
Than she herself was for her own.

Poor wife ! foolish it seem'd to fly
To sobs instead of dignity,
When she was hurt. Now, more than all,
Heart-rending and angelical
That ignorance of what to do,
Bewilder'd still by wrong from you.
(For what man ever yet had grace
Ne'er to abuse his power and place ?)

No magic of her voice or smile
Raifed in a trice a fairy isle.
But fondness for her underwent
An unregarded increment.

Like that which lifts, through centuries,
The coral reef within the seas,
Till, lo ! the land where was the wave.
Alas ! 't is everywhere her grave.



VII.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

AT Jane's desire, left High-Hurst
Park

Should make our cottage cold and dark,
After three weeks we came away
To spend at home our Wedding-Day.
Twelve wedding-days gone by, and none
Yet kept, to keep them all in one,
She and myself, (with John and Grace
On donkeys,) visited the place
I first drew breath in, Knatchley Wood.
Bearing the basket, stuff'd with food,
Milk, loaves, hard eggs, and marmalade,
I halted where the wandering glade

Divides the thicket. There I knew,
It seem'd, the very drops of dew
Below the unalter'd eglantine.
Nothing had changed since I was nine!

In the green desert, down to eat
We sat, our rustic grace at meat
Good appetite, through that long climb
Hungry two hours before the time.
And there Jane took her stitching out,
And John for birds' nests look'd about,
And Grace and Baby, in between
The warm blades of the breathing green,
Dodged grafshoppers ; and I no less,
In conscientious idleness,
Enjoy'd myself, under the noon
Stretch'd, and the sounds and sights of June
Receiving, with a drowsy charm,
Through muffled ear and folded arm.

And then, as if I sweetly dream'd,
I half remember'd how it seem'd

When I, too, was a little child
About the wild wood roving wild.
Pure breezes from the far-off height
Melted the blindness from my sight,
Until, with rapture, grief, and awe,
I saw again as then I saw.
As then I saw, I saw again
The harvest wagon in the lane,
With high-hung tokens of its pride
Left in the elms on either side ;
The daifies coming out at dawn
In constellations on the lawn ;
The glory of the daffodil ;
The three black windmills on the hill,
Whose magic arms, flung wildly by,
Sent magic shadows past the rye.
Within the leafy coppice, lo,
More wealth than misers' dreams could
show,
The blackbird's warm and woolly brood,

Five golden beaks agape for food ;
The Gypsies, all the summer seen
Native as poppies to the Green ;
The winter, with its frosts and thaws
And opulence of hips and haws ;
The lovely marvel of the snow ;
The Tamar, with its altering show
Of gay ships sailing up and down,
Among the fields and by the Town.
And, dearer far than anything,
Came back the songs you used to sing.
(Ah, might you sing such songs again,
And I, your child, but hear as then,
With conscious profit of the gulf
Flown over from my present self !)
And, as to men's retreating eyes,
Beyond high mountains higher rife,
Still farther back there shone to me
The dazzling dusk of infancy.
Thither I look'd, as, sick of night,

The Alpine shepherd looks to the height,
And does not see the day, 't is true,
But sees the rosy tops that do.

Meantime Jane stitch'd, and fann'd
the flies

From my repose, with hush'd replies
To Grace, and smiles when Baby fell.

Her countenance love visible
Appear'd, love audible her voice.

Why in the past alone rejoice,
Whilst here was wealth before me cast
Which, as you say, if 't were but past
Were then most precious ! Question vain
When ask'd again and yet again,
Year after year ; yet now, for no
Cause, but that heaven's bright winds
will blow

Not at our beck, but as they lift,
It brought that distant, golden mist
To grace the hour, firing the deep

Of spirit and the drowsy keep
Of joy, till, spreading uncontain'd,
The holy power of seeing gain'd
The outward eye, this owning even,
That where there's love and truth there's
heaven.

Debtor to few, far-separate hours
Like this, that truths for me are powers,
(Ah, happy hours, 't is something yet
Not to forget that I forget !)
I know their worth, and this, the chief,
I count not vain because 't was brief.

And now a cloud, bright, huge, and
calm,
Rose, doubtful if for bale or balm ;
O'ertoppling crags, portentous towers
Appear'd at beck of viewleſs powers
Along a rifted mountain range.
Untraceable and swift in change,
Those glittering peaks, disrupted, spread

To solemn bulks, seen overhead ;
The sunshine quench'd, from one dark
form

Fumed the appalling light of storm.
Straight to the zenith, black with bale,
The Gypsies' smoke rose deadly pale ;
And one wide night of hopeless hue
Hid from the heart the recent blue.
And soon, with thunder crackling loud,
A flash within the formless cloud
Show'd vague recess, projection dim,
Lone failing rack, and shadowy rim.

We stood safe group'd beneath a shed.
Grace hid behind Jane's gown for dread,
Who told her, fondling with her hair,
“ The naughty thunder, God took care
It should not hurt good little girls.”
At this Grace re-arranged her curls ;
But John, disputing, seem'd to me
Too much for Jane's theology,

Who bade him watch the tempest. Now
A blast made all the woodland bow ;
Against the whirl of leaves and dust
Kine dropp'd their heads ; the tortured
gust

Jagg'd and convulsed the ascending smoke
To mockery of the lightning's stroke.
The blood prick'd, and a blinding flash
And close, co-instantaneous crash
Humbled the soul, and the rain all round
Resilient dimm'd the whistling ground,
Nor flagg'd in force from first to last,
Till, sudden as it came, 't was past,
Leaving a trouble in the copse
Of brawling birds and tinkling drops.

Change beyond hope ! Far thunder
faint

Mutter'd its vast and vain complaint,
And gaps and fractures fringed with light
Show'd the sweet skies, with squadrons
bright

Of cloudlets glittering calm and fair
Through gulfs of calm and glittering air.

With this adventure, we return'd.
The roads the feet no longer burn'd.
A wholesome smell of rainy earth
Refresh'd our spirits, tired of mirth.
The donkey-boy drew friendly near
My wife, and, touch'd by the kind cheer
Her countenance show'd, or sooth'd per-
chance

By the soft evening's sad advance,
As we were, stroked the flanks and head
Of the afs, and, somewhat thick-voiced,
said,

“To 'ave to wop the donkeys so
'Ardens the 'art, but they won't go
Without!” My wife, by this impress'd,
As men judge poets by their best,
When now we reach'd the welcome door,
Gave him his hire, and sixpence more.

VIII.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother, I just write to say
We've pass'd a most delightful day,
As, no doubt, you have heard from Fred.
(Once, you may recollect, you said,
True friendship neither doubts nor doats,
And does not read each other's notes ;
And so we never do !) I'll miss,
For Fred's impatient, all but this :
We spent — the children, he, and I —
Our wedding anniversary
In the woods, where, while I tried to keep
The flies off, so that he might sleep,
He actually kiss'd my foot,—

At least, the beautiful French boot,
Your gift,— and, laughing with no cause
But pleasure, said I really was
The very nicest little wife ;
And that he prized me more than life.
When Fred once says a thing, you know,
You feel so sure it must be so,
It's almost dreadful ! Then on love,
And marriage, and the world above,
We talk'd ; for, though we seldom name
Religion, both now think the same.
O Mother, what a bar's removed
To loving and to being loved !
For no agreement really is
In anything when none's in this.
Why, once, if dear, dear Frederick press'd
His wife against his hearty breast,
The interior difference seem'd to tear
My own, until I could not bear
The trouble. Oh ! that dreadful strife,

It shew'd indeed that faith is life.
Fred never felt this. If he did,
I'm sure it could not have been hid ;
For wives, I need not say to you,
Can feel just what their husbands do,
Without a word or look. But then
It is not so, you know, with men.

And now I'll tell you how he talk'd,
While in the Wood we sat or walk'd.
He told me that "The Sadducees
Inquired not of true marriages
When they provoked that dark reply,
Which now costs love so many a sigh.
In vain would Christ have taught such
clods

That Cæsar's things are also God's ! ”
I can't quite think that happy thought,
It seems so novel, does it not ?
Fred only means to say, you know,
It *may*, for aught we are told, be so.

He thinks that joy is never higher
Than when love worships its desire
Far off. His words were : “After all,
Hope’s mere reversal may befall
The partners of His glories who
Daily is crucified anew :
Splendid privations, martyrdoms
To which no weak remission comes,
Perpetual passion for the good
Of them that feel no gratitude,
Far circlings, as of planets’ fires,
Round never to be reach’d desires,
Whatever rapturouslly sighs
That life is love, love sacrifice.”
And then, as if he spoke aloud
To some one looking from a cloud,
“ All I am sure of heaven is this,
Howe’er the mode, I shall not misf
One true delight which I have known.
Not on the changeful earth alone

Shall loyalty remain unmoved
T'wards everything I ever loved.
So Heaven's voice calls, like Rachel's voice
To Jacob in the field, 'Rejoice !
Serve on some seven more sordid years,
Too short for weariness or tears ;
Serve on ; then, O Beloved, well-tried,
Take me forever for thy bride !'"

You see, though Frederick sometimes
shocks

One's old ideas, he's orthodox.
Was it not kind to talk to me
So really confidentially ?

Soon silent, as before, he lay,
But I felt giddy all the day,
And now my head aches ; so farewell !

Postscript. — I've one thing more to
tell :

Fred's teaching Johnny algebra !
The rogue already treats mamma

As if he thought her, in his mind,
Rather silly, but very kind.
Is not that nice? It's so like Fred!
Good-bye! for I'm to go to bed,
Because I'm tired, or ought to be.
That's Frederick's way of late. You see
He really loves me after all.
He's growing quite tyrannical!

THE END.

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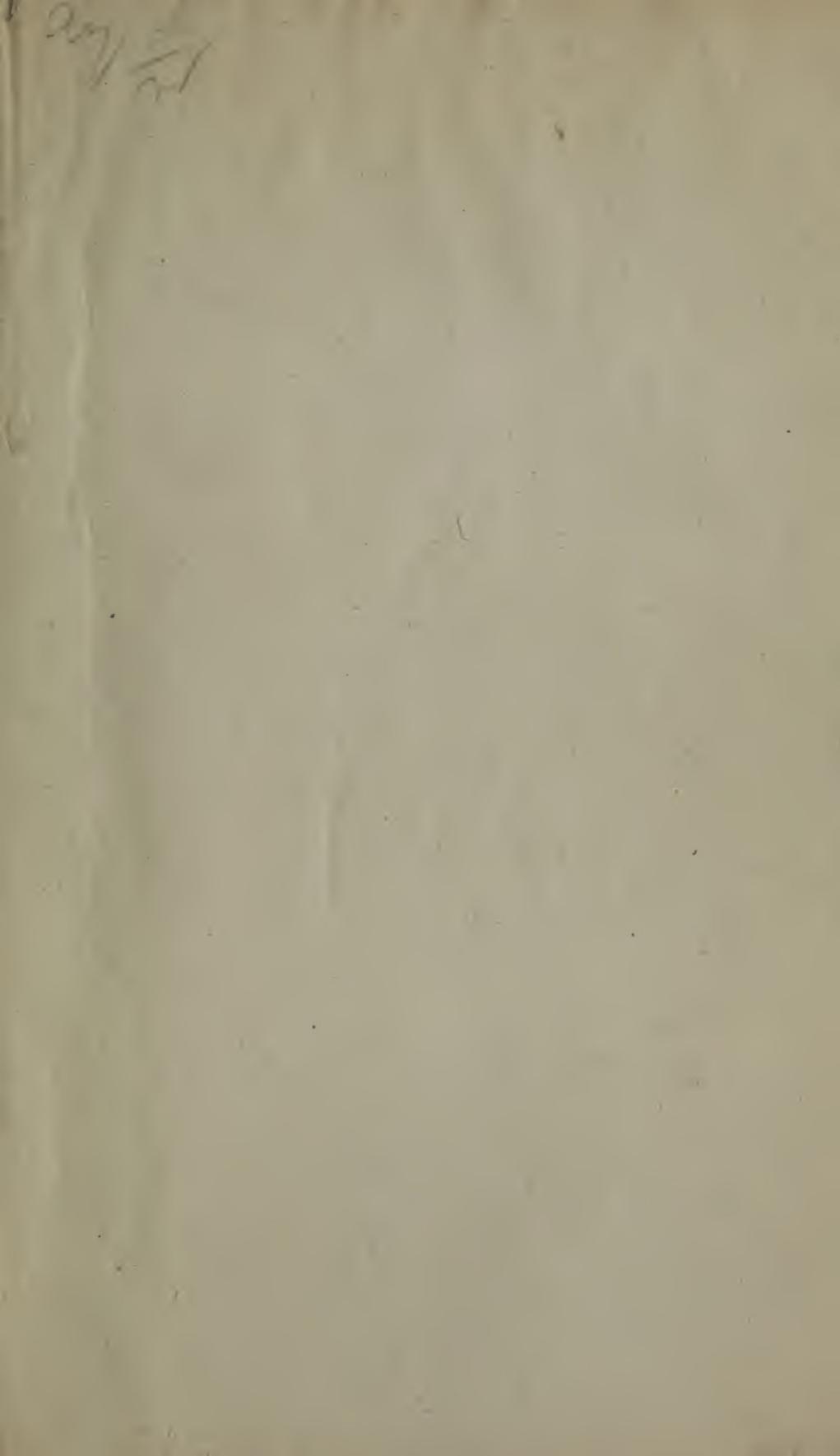
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